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HISTOIRE
DE LA
MARINE FRANÇAISE

SOUS
LE CONSULAT ET L'EMPIRE

FAISANT SUITE
A L'HISTOIRE DE LA MARINE FRANÇAISE
SOUS LA PREMIÈRE RÉPUBLIQUE

PAR
E. CHEVALIER
CAPITAINE DE VAISSEAU

PARIS
LIBRAIRIE L. HACHETTE ET C^{ie}
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Marguerite Joubert.

HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH NAVY
UNDER
THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE¹

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The History of the French Navy during the American War of Independence. - Paris, Hachette. Price. 7 fr. 50

The History of the French Navy under the First Republic.- Paris, Hachette. Price. 7 fr. 50

The French Navy and the German Navy during the War of 1870-1871. Paris, Plon. Price. 3 fr. 50²

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FOLLOWING
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LIBRAIRIE L. HACHETTE ET Cie
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HISTORY OF THE FRENCH NAVY UNDER THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE

BOOK ONE

New organization of the port service. Reconstitution of the fleet headquarters. - Attempts made by the consular government to supply the island of Malta and send reinforcements to Egypt. Capture of the ship *Généreux*. Battle of the Guillaume-Tell. Capitulation of the island of Malta. - Capture of the frigates *Désirée*, *Médée*, *Concorde* and *Pallas*. - The English in the bay of Quiberon, at Ferrol and in front of Cadiz. - The corvette *Danaé* surrenders to the French. - Burning of the *Queen-Charlotte*. - Sinking of the ships *Repulse* and *Marlborough*. - Battle of the *Vengeance* and the *Constellation*. Battle of the corvette *Berceau* and the frigate *Boston*. - Treaty of September 30, 1800 which puts an end to the dispute between France and the United States of America. The islands of Gorée and Curaçao are taken by the English. Violence committed by the British navy against neutrals. Attack on the Danish frigate *Freya* by an English division. *Freya* and the convoy under its escort are captured. The Court of London, far from accepting Denmark's claims, demands reparations for the insult made to its flag. Mission of Lord Withworth to Copenhagen. Provisional solution to the dispute between England and Denmark. make the Swedish schooner *Hofnung*. Prussian ship stopped by an English privateer. Convention of armed neutrality of 1800. Sending of an English squadron before Copenhagen. Battle of April 2. Conclusion of an armistice between England and Denmark. Death of Paul I. - Treaty of June 17 between Russia and England. Accession of Sweden and Denmark to this treaty.¹¹

I

The First Consul* regarded a strongly constituted navy as one of the essential elements of the prosperity and greatness of France. His first care was devoted to the reorganization of this important branch of our military power. Having seen the navy up close, on the coasts of Italy and during the Egyptian campaign, he had penetrated most of the causes which had led it to the unfortunate situation in which it found itself. Convinced that naval officers did not have, in the arsenals, the place which was theirs, he wanted to bring about prompt reforms in the organization of the port service. On November 29, 1799, the First Consul wrote to the Minister of the Navy, the engineer Forfait: I beg you to propose to the Navy section of the Council of State the following question: "What is the best organization that could be given to the administration of ports?" The goal that the council was to achieve was thus stated: "To have as few employees as possible; to obtain the greatest economy in work at the same time as the greatest speed in the execution of orders; to fix the type of work, of authority which suits the civil employees; to grant to the military the fullness of the functions which is necessary and to determine them in such a way that having at their disposal the movement and the classification of the men whom they must have beat, they interfere as little as possible with the details of the accounting."¹²

*Napoleon Bonaparte

The Navy section of the Council of State responded to the question submitted to it by requesting the creation, in each port, of a new official to whom it gave the name of maritime prefect. The latter corresponded alone with the minister. His action was exercised on men and on things. He had, under his orders, five heads of department. One of them, under the title of military chief, replaced the former commander of arms. An engineer directed the naval constructions. The movements of the port were entrusted to the naval officers and the artillery service to the officers of this arm. Finally, an administrator, called general commissioner, had in his attributions the accounting of funds and materials, food and supplies. In summary, a civil servant of the specialty was placed at the head of each detail of the port, but the entire service was directed by the maritime prefect. This new civil servant became the representative of the minister. The section of the navy in the Council of State had not wanted to limit the choice of the government by designating the body to which the maritime prefect should belong. While showing this reserve, it had clearly formulated its opinion on this point; it considered that it was among the general officers, joining military qualities with administrative knowledge, that he should be taken.

The proposals contained in the report of the section of the navy in the Council of State aroused very strong opposition. The naval officers had lost, at the beginning of the Revolution, their most legitimate attributions. Those who, since that time, occupied important positions in the ports were animated by the desire to keep them.¹³

The minister sent a long memorandum to the Council of State in which he vigorously opposed the plans of his adversaries. Not only did he reject the new civil servant that they wanted to create, but he did not admit that there should be several departments in the arsenals. He wanted only one, including naval construction, port movements and artillery. At the head of this service, he placed a director general of works; this director general would have been an engineer. It would have been difficult, moreover, to understand that the most important department did not absorb the others. The minister tried to show that the unity of command in the ports could have the most serious consequences for the security of the republic. These arguments, which had already been used, had lost their value. For some time now, unprejudiced minds had clearly perceived the error that the Constituent Assembly had committed in sacrificing the institutions of the navy to politics. What is striking in the discussions that took place at that time was the disorder reigning in minds relative to the organization of the different services of the navy. No one could recover from the commotion that had occurred in 1791, when the old organization, the fruit of time and experience, had disappeared. The creation of maritime prefects, that is to say, officials placed at the head of the ports and concentrating all the powers in their hands, was decided. By an order of the Consuls, dated July 20, 1800, State Councilor Caffarelli, Rear Admiral Vence, State Councilor Redon, Rear Admiral Martin, Rear Admiral Nielly, and Ordonnateur Bertin, were appointed maritime prefects in Brest, Toulon, Lorient, Rochefort, Antwerp and Le Havre.¹⁴

The consular government proceeded with a new organization of the fleet staff. An order of August 14, 1800 set the number of officers of all ranks at thirteen hundred and fifty-four. The new officers included eight vice-admirals, sixteen rear-admirals, one hundred and fifty ship captains, one hundred and eighty frigate captains, four hundred ship lieutenants and six hundred ship ensigns. The Navy Department designated, each year, the officers whose employment seemed necessary, in view of the projected armaments. These were on active service; the others appeared on a list called non-active. An officer, who remained three years in this position, was no longer part of the corps. The frameworks, provided for by the decree of August 14, were to be definitively constituted on September 23, 1800. Officers not included in this organization were dismissed from service. They were granted a reform salary. The measure taken by the Consuls was not surprising. Every time, since the beginning of the Revolution, that there had been a change in the government personnel, the procedure had been the same. The inadequacy of the fleet staff appeared with such obviousness that each new regime wanted to modify its composition. Officers, notoriously known as incapable, disappeared, but the decree of August 14 did not remedy the problem. To achieve this result, it would have been necessary to create schools intended to ensure the recruitment of the fleet staff. Nothing was done in this direction.¹⁵

The first appointments included six vice-admirals and fourteen rear-admirals, namely: Vice-Admirals Thévenard, Truguet, Villaret-Joyeuse, Martin, Rosily, Bruix and Rear-Admirals Latouche-Tréville, Vence, Nielly, Leissègues, Blanquet Duchayla, Villeneuve, Lacrosse, Terrasson, Decrès, Courand, Ganteaume, Dordelin, Durand-Linois and Dumanor-Lepelley.

The consular government asked the navy to supply the island of Malta and to bring reinforcements to the army of Egypt. The situation of Malta, tightly blockaded by the English, called for particular attention. The French troops, shut up within the walls of Valletta, were besieged by the population, which had been joined by a detachment of English troops. At the end of 1799, they had barely a few months' supply of food. If, in a very short time, the place was not relieved, General Vaubois, whatever his energy, would find himself obliged to capitulate. The British navy, accurately informed of our shortage, from the point of view of supplies, redoubled its vigilance to prevent any communication of the garrison with the sea. The blockade squadron had an easy role to fulfill, since its surveillance was exercised only on one point. From the ports of the south of France and the coast of Italy, vessels were sent to Malta. The First Consul ordered the Minister of the Navy to send the brig *Lodi* and the frigate *l'Égyptienne* to Egypt. Every week, a notice was to set sail for this destination. With these measures, it was possible to face the difficulties of the first moment and above all to show our soldiers that France had not forgotten them; but it was necessary to use other means to effectively assist the two threatened points.¹⁶

At the beginning of January 1800, Rear Admiral Perrée received the order to go to Malta with a division comprising a ship, the *Généreux*, of seventy-four, three corvettes and a transport. On the 26th, this general officer, taking advantage of a moment when the blockade squadron had moved away, put to sea. The *Généreux* having suffered mast damage off the Hyères Islands, our ships returned to Toulon. Rear-Admiral Perrée set sail again on February 6. On the 18th, at daybreak, the French division was in sight of the island of Lampedouze, in the south of Sicily, when the lookouts of the *Généreux* reported a ship in which it was not long before a ship was recognized. Shortly after, three other ships of the same force and a frigate were sighted. These five vessels were the *Foudroyant* of eighty, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Nelson, the *Northumberland*, the *Audacious* and the *Alexander*, of seventy-four, and the frigate *Success*. Rear-Admiral Perrée left each captain free to manoeuvre for the safety of his vessel. At eight thirty minutes, the transport *Ville de Marseille* was captured. The frigate *Success*, which was at the head of the hunters, reached *Généreux*. She cannonaded it as soon as it was within range and caused damage which delayed its progress. *Généreux* brought the English frigate abeam and sent two volleys "which should have sunk it," wrote the commander of the French vessel, "if our guns had been manned by men more trained in cannonading and at the same time more seasoned." At half past eight the *Généreux* was joined by the *Foudroyant* and the *Northumberland*; after a short engagement, it lowered its flag.¹⁷

Rear Admiral Perrée, seriously injured during the action, died the same day from his wounds. In the letter he sent to Lord Keith, Commander-in-Chief of the British naval forces in the Mediterranean, to report the capture of the *Généreux*, Admiral Nelson spoke highly of the conduct of Captain Peard of the *Success*. This frigate preceded Admiral Nelson's ships. In order to give the *Foudroyant* and the ships following it time to join the *Généreux*, Captain Peard had not hesitated to attack this vessel. This conduct was obviously commendable. Some twenty years earlier, during the American War of Independence, the frigate, which had imitated the maneuver of the *Success*, would have paid dearly for its audacity. Except for very rare exceptions, this was no longer the case. The *Success*, which had received several volleys from the *Généreux*, had only nine men hit by the fire of this vessel, one killed and eight wounded. It can be seen that the English officers could dare a lot without exposing themselves to great risks. In the letter cited above, Admiral Nelson, after speaking of Captain Peard, added that the advantage obtained that day was due equally to the skill of the captain of the *Alexander* and to the activity and good maneuvers of Captains Sir Edward Berry, of the *Foudroyant*, and *Martin*, of the *Northumberland*. It seems that the capture of a vessel of seventy-four, poorly armed and encumbered with equipment, by three vessels of seventy-four and one of eighty, not counting the frigate, did not deserve so much praise.¹⁸

Since the possession of Malta was of great interest to France, it was legitimate for the Navy Department to make the greatest efforts to rescue the brave soldiers who, for nearly two years, had given such a fine example of courage and devotion. But there is reason to wonder whether we were using the most appropriate means to achieve this result. Rear-Admiral Perrée's ships were in such a condition that they were neither in a position to fight nor to escape, by a rapid march, from the pursuit of the enemy. Finally, was it with a division that this enterprise should have been attempted? If we take a look at the map of the island, we see how easy it was, given the limits within which our troops were confined, to monitor the entry and exit of the port. The *Guillaume - Tell* was soon to experience this. Only small ships, commanded by captains who knew the localities, had any chance of getting through. A ship from Marseilles, the *Bellone*, carrying two hundred barrels of wine and four to five thousand pints of brandy, managed to reach the port of Valletta at about the time when the garrison learned of the capture of the *Généreux* and the dispersion of its convoy. If ships sailing alone had any chance of passing unnoticed by the English cruise, on the other hand, it was not possible, with a small number of ships arriving at rare intervals, to satisfy the pressing needs of the garrison. A means presented itself for supplying the island of Malta. It was necessary for a French squadron, concealing its course from the enemy, to appear before Valletta with superior forces. Forcing the blockade squadron to move away, it would have thrown all the necessary aid into the island. Unfortunately the superiority of the English navy and the vigilance with which it observed our movements made any attempt of this kind difficult.¹⁹

When he came to power, the First Consul had been concerned about this combination; he had not found the means that would have allowed its execution. The Franco-Spanish fleet was considerable only in number. We had neither provisions nor equipment in Brest. It was first necessary to put our squadron and that of our allies in a state to put to sea.

At the beginning of January of the year 1800, Vice-Admiral Bruix was ready to leave for the coast of Egypt with nine ships. He had orders to set sail as soon as he could do so without being seen by the enemy. Before the opportunity to go out presented itself, he had eighteen ships gathered under his flag. The enemy forces that were blockading the port did not exceed twenty ships. The First Consul had the idea of joining the Spanish squadron with the ships of Admiral Bruix. The combined fleet, composed of thirty-five ships, having a marked superiority over the enemy, would have put to sea. Driving the blockade squadron before it, it would have made for Malta. After the detachment of the men and equipment intended for this island, Admirals Bruix and Mazzaredo would have returned to Toulon. They would have been joined, in this port, by the Spanish divisions of Cadiz and Ferrol. All these forces would have gone to the island of Minorca, which an attempt would have been made to take from the English. Proposals to this effect were addressed to the commander-in-chief of the Spanish squadron, Admiral Mazzaredo, who presented objections and requested that modifications be made to this plan of campaign. Time elapsed before a decision was taken. The English, warned of our plan or suspecting it, sent forty-five ships to Brest.²⁰

The government gave up on this combination; the Mediterranean ports received orders to increase the number of isolated ships sent to Malta and Egypt.

Shortly after his arrival in Malta, Rear Admiral Villeneuve left his ship, the *Guillaume-Tell*, to take command of the navy. Rear Admiral Decrès, whose flag was flown on the frigate *Diane*, was called to command the forts of the place. The crews of the *Guillaume-Tell*, *Diane* and *la Justice* served on land alongside the garrison. At that time, the latter barely reached the number of two thousand and some hundred men, after deducting the sick. On learning of the capture of the *Généreux* and the dispersion of the convoy sailing under its escort, General Vaubois understood how difficult it would be to renew such an attempt. Wanting to reduce the number of mouths he had to feed, he decided to send the *Guillaume-Tell* back to France. Rear-Admiral Decrès put his flag on this ship; he was charged with explaining to the First Consul the true situation of our troops. To set sail from La Valette with a ship, in the presence of the English cruise, was an undertaking full of difficulties. At that moment, the enemy forces, which were standing in front of the port, included the ships the *Foudroyant* of eighty, the *Alexander* of seventy-four, the *Lion* of sixty-four and the frigate the *Pénélope* of forty-four. The blockade squadron, promptly informed of the preparations that the *Guillaume-Tell* was making to put to sea, kept a special watch on the movements of this ship. On the evening of July 30, the *Foudroyant*, the *Alexander* and the *Lion* anchored in front of La Valette.²¹

At eleven o'clock in the evening, an hour after the moon had set, the *Guillaume-Tell* set sail with a light southerly breeze. Hardly had this ship cast off its moorings than its maneuver was known to the enemy. The English batteries immediately opened a very lively fire on it. The breeze, outside the port, was blowing from the south-east in a fresh breeze; Admiral Decrès had the wind tighten to starboard tack in order to leave the ships of the line to leeward. The *Guillaume-Tell* passed a short distance from several ships which did not betray its presence by any signal, probably taking it for one of their own. The admiral was already hoping to hide the exit of his ship from the blockading squadron, when, at about eleven and a quarter, a ship under sail was sighted. It was the frigate *Pénélope*. Taking the same tack as the *Guillaume-Tell*, the latter followed it, covering itself with fire to indicate its position. The *Pénélope*, which had a great advantage over the *Guillaume-Tell* in speed, joined this ship at one o'clock in the morning. She placed herself behind it and, firing alternately on one tack and the other, she sent it broadsides. Admiral Decrès was tempted to present the frigate broadside and send it a few volleys, in order to put it out of action to follow him. But already, despite the darkness of the night, the ships of the blockade squadron could be seen on the horizon, arriving under full sail. This situation imposed on the admiral the obligation to avoid any delay. At five o'clock in the morning, the *Guillaume-Tell*, whose rigging had been cut, dismasted its main topmast. Shortly afterwards, the *Lion*, sixty-four, overtaking the *Pénélope*, took up position on the port beam of the *Guillaume-Tell*, within gunshot [or rifle range].²²

The fire was very lively on both sides. After an hour of combat, the *Lion*, very badly treated, stopped firing. On the orders of Admiral Decrès, Captain Saunier maneuvered to board this vessel. He succeeded in engaging the bowsprit of the *Guillaume-Tell* in the mizzen shrouds of the *Lion*; the bowsprit having broken, the two vessels separated. At this moment a third adversary appeared, the *Foudroyant* of eighty. A new fight began. For nearly an hour, the two vessels placed very close to each other, cannonaded each other with real fury. The *Guillaume-Tell* lost her mizzenmast and her mainmast, the *Foudroyant* her mizzenmast and her foremast. Captain Saunier tried to board the *Foudroyant*. He succeeded in placing the *Guillaume-Tell* across the bowsprit of the English ship, but the latter, topping all its sails, freed itself. However, in this position, the *Foudroyant* received several broadsides which swept it from front to back. Around seven o'clock in the morning, the *Lion*, which had kept away from the battlefield to repair its damage, took part in the fight again. It was at this moment that the brave Captain Saunier was obliged to leave the bridge. Lieutenant Donadieu replaced him. The *Guillaume-Tell* was in a complete state of disrepair. A cannon had burst; the guns of the forecastles and nineteen guns of the batteries were dismantled. Debris from the masts, sails and rigging engaged part of the port battery. Whatever the disadvantages of this situation, the courage of the crew, far from weakening, was increasing.²³

The *Guillaume-Tell*, which was fighting the *Foudroyant* on the starboard side and the *Lion* on the port side, was responding with her guns from the rear to the fire of the *Pénélope*. At half past eight, the foremast was cut off. It fell as well as the small topmast, masking the entire port side. Without masts, across the wave, the ship was moving so much that it was necessary, with each roll, to close the gun ports of the lower battery. The *Guillaume-Tell* was no longer steering; the *Lion*, the *Foudroyant* and the *Pénélope* were cannonading her without her being able to respond. In this position, wrote the admiral, in reporting on his fight to the minister, "it was only too evident not only that the safety of the ship was impossible, but also that I could do no more harm to the enemy. I could not therefore conceal from myself that the men I would lose by a longer resistance would be gratuitously sacrificed to a vain obstinacy. On this conviction and that the defense of the *Guillaume-Tell* had been sufficiently sustained to be nothing but honorable, I believed it my duty to yield to fortune and, at about nine thirty-five minutes, after the complete dismasting, the flag was lowered." The *Pénélope*, which had always kept far from the *Guillaume-Tell*, was alone in a position to sail it. She took it in tow and headed for Syracuse. After twenty-four hours spent repairing its damage, the *Lion* gave tow to the *Foudroyant*. On the three English ships, there were seventeen killed and one hundred and five wounded. These losses were distributed as follows. The *Foudroyant* had eight killed and sixty-four wounded; the *Lion* eight killed and thirty-eight wounded; the *Pénélope* one killed and three wounded. The number of men hit by enemy fire, on the *Guillaume-Tell*, amounted to seventy-five killed and one hundred and thirty-four wounded.²⁴

Lieutenant Michel Aussety and midshipman Alexandre Vidal were among the first; Captain Saunier, ensigns Paulin, Lagrèze and midshipman Dounier were among the second. Admiral Decrès had received three wounds.

It would be difficult to find, in the annals of all navies, a more glorious combat than that of the *Guillaume-Tell*. The skill of the leaders, the valour of the officers and the crew, this energy which did not weaken, despite the superiority of the enemy, call, in a particular way, attention to this combat. In this fierce struggle, which lasted several hours, the honour went to the vanquished. "I believe it is superfluous," said the admiral to the minister, in concluding his report, "to dwell on the conduct of the staff and crew of the *Guillaume-Tell*. The mere fact of its combat and the three attempts at boarding where, despite the superiority of the enemy, we were close to success, tell you enough, citizen minister, what confidence the talents of the captain, the devotion of the officers and the bravery of all those, of whatever rank, whom I had the honour of commanding inspired in me. "On October 26, 1800, the Minister of the Navy wrote to Rear Admiral Decrès: "I am pleased, Citizen General, to announce to you that in consideration of the glorious resistance of the ship *Guillaume-Tell*, the First Consul, by an order of the 1st of this month, has appointed frigate captain Citizen Donadieu, first lieutenant of this ship. Citizen Joseph Debergne, first ensign of the same ship, has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant of the ship and the non-maintained ensigns Figannières, Ganivet, Aune, Riche, Ennan, Lagrèze and Blanc have been appointed ensigns of the ship."²⁵

The same decree also instructs me to express to the other officers of the staff and to the crew of the *Guillaume-Tell* the satisfaction of the government for the zeal they have shown in assisting you and supporting the glory of the national flag."

Of the four ships that had set sail from Aboukir Bay on August 2, 1798, the *Généreux* and the *Guillaume-Tell* had fallen into the hands of the English. The other two, the *Diane* and the *Justice*, were still in Malta. General Vaubois, who had no illusions about the fate reserved for his troops, wanted to save these two frigates. They left the port of La Valette on the night of August 24. Although the weather was dark, they were sighted and chased away by the frigate *Success* and the ships *Généreux* and *Northumberland*. The *Diane*, after a short engagement with the *Success*, lowered her colours. This frigate had only one hundred and fourteen men in its crew. The *Justice* managed to elude the enemy's pursuit; she anchored on 1 September in the harbour of Toulon. At the end of August, only five ships had entered the port of La Valette since the start of the blockade. General Vaubois, overcome by famine, capitulated on 5 September. Two sixty-four ships, the *Dejo* and the *Athénien*, and the thirty-six frigate the *Carthaginoise*, which lack of personnel had not allowed them to arm, fell into the hands of the English.

Vice-Admiral Bruix, whose health was impaired, was replaced in his command by Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville. The armaments continued at Brest. It was proposed in Paris to have a large number of ships in this harbor, in order to force the English to maintain considerable forces in front of this port.²⁶

In the event that part of the blockade squadron had withdrawn, ours would have put to sea to go to the Mediterranean or to any other point, according to the requirements of the moment. Very express recommendations, relating to the conduct of the ships, to the training and discipline of the crews, were addressed to Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville. The First Consul wrote to the minister to inform him that he would pay a visit to the squadron, as soon as circumstances permitted. He added: Order the general commanding the Brest squadron, as well as all the generals and ship captains to remain constantly on board, to sleep in their ships and to exercise the crews with a new activity; establish, by regulation, prizes for the young sailors who show the most activity and for the gunners who distinguish themselves in shooting. Not a single day should pass without, on each ship, the exercise of the cannon with cannon balls, firing alternately on targets that would be established on the coast and on carcasses that would be placed in the harbor." Admiral Lacrosse, placed at the head of a division of seven ships and five frigates, was to take, to Saint-Domingue, four thousand five hundred men, the generals Sahuguet and Quantin and the state councilor l'Escallier. In the first days of April, this division set sail with a light breeze from the north-northwest. It had hardly been out when the winds, passing to the west and weakening, forced it to return. The fine weather was coming. Some months were to elapse before Admiral Lacrosse could find an opportunity to steal his sortie from the blockading squadron, the passenger troops were landed and the expedition postponed to a more favorable moment.²⁷

The port of Dunkirk had received, at the end of 1799, the order to arm the frigates *Carmagnole* with forty-four, the *Incorruptible*, the *Poursuivante* and the *Désirée*, with thirty-six. These ships were to be sent to Flushing to complete their armament. Division Chief Castagnier had command of these four frigates. Before they were able to sail, the port of Dunkirk was blockaded by the English. In the first days of July 1800, the enemy cruise included two frigates, a corvette, two brigs, a bombard, eleven gunboats and several fire ships. On the 7th, towards midnight, the corvette *Dart* entered the harbor; the two brigs, some gunboats and four fireships accompanied it. The winds were blowing fresh from the west, and the current was at its strongest. A brig of twelve and two gunboats had been attached to the French division. This was arranged, going from west to east, in the following order: the brig, the two gunboats, the *Poursuivante*, the *Carmagnole*, the *Incorruptible* and the *Désirée*. The night was dark; moreover, we were keeping a poor guard. The English corvette, which was coming from the west, passed in front of the brig, the two gunboats, the *Poursuivante* and the *Carmagnole*. On board these two frigates, the men in charge of external surveillance hailed the *Dart*, which they took for a French warship coming to anchor with a convoy. The *Incorruptible* was the first ship to open fire on the English corvette. The latter responded with a broadside from its fifteen thirty-two carronades loaded with double projectiles.²⁸

She continued on her way, dropped an anchor astern and boarded the last ship of the line, the *Désirée*. The crew of the *Dart*, reinforced by a detachment of elite men from various enemy ships, jumped aboard the French frigate. The *Désirée*, which had not made any combat arrangements, was captured in less than fifteen minutes. The English went out with this frigate and rejoined their division. Our ships avoided the fireships either by cutting their cables or by setting sail. This bold attack cost the English only one man killed and three wounded. The unfortunate crew of the *Désirée* suffered great losses. Of all the officers, only one survived this affair; the others, including the captain, were killed or died of their wounds a few days later. Division Chief Castagnier, who had been ill for some time, was on land on the night of July 7.

The conduct of the maritime authorities of the port of Dunkirk was subjected to a severe investigation. A large number of questions were sent from Paris to the commander of the arms and they were ordered to answer them in writing. Provisional arrests were imposed on them. The question was whether they had both done everything in their power to equip these four frigates, both in terms of equipment and personnel. The First Consul himself examined all the documents relating to this affair; he acknowledged that the commander of the arms and the commander of the arms had committed no fault. The commander of the division was brought before a court martial.²⁹

According to the prosecution, Commander Castagnier had not complied with his instructions which required him to go to Flushing with the four frigates. He had done nothing to protect these same vessels against the enemy's undertakings, or to ensure their resistance in the event of an attack. Finally, he was not on board when the *Désirée* was captured. Commander Castagnier was acquitted. The real culprit was the Navy Department, which began fitting out ships in all the ports without having the necessary means to complete them. Things were no different in Brest. While new ships were being fitted out in the port, those in the harbor had incomplete crews and insufficient supplies.

The forty-strong *Concorde*, the thirty-six-strong *Médée* and the *Franchise*, Captains Landolphe, Coudein and Jurien, left the harbor of the island of Aix on May 6, 1799. These three frigates were under the command of Captain Landolphe, of the *Concorde*. After cruising along the western coast of Africa, from the mouth of the Senegal to the equator, Captain Landolphe seized Prince Island where he spent a month. When he was about to leave, he returned the island to the Portuguese for a ransom. The French division crossed the ocean and dropped anchor in front of Montevideo to resupply; it put to sea again on July 10, 1800. After a few days spent cruising, at the height of Cape Frio, the frigates set sail north. We had captured twenty-three English or American vessels on the coast of Africa, and five Portuguese or American ones off Cape Frio. According to his instructions, Captain Landolphe was to sail up the coast of Brazil, visit the coast of Newfoundland and return to France.³⁰

On August 4, at 17 degrees south latitude, five tall ships were sighted, to windward, at a distance of about three leagues. Commander Landolphe believed he was in the presence of five ships of the line. Instead of immediately forcing sail, he wasted time in useless maneuvers. The English set out in pursuit of us; by three o'clock they had closed in. Captain Landolphe reported that he was leaving each captain free to maneuver for the safety of his ship. Wanting to lighten his frigate, he had all the boats, the drome, the spare masts and the guns of the forecastles thrown into the sea. At five o'clock in the evening, a vessel, followed at some distance by three of the vessels reported in the morning, arrived within cannon range of the *Concorde*. This frigate came across, sent its broadside to the English vessel and lowered its flag. The vessel to which the *Concorde* was heading was the *Belliqueux* of sixty. The *Médée*, hit at around seven thirty in the evening by two enemy vessels, lowered its flag. The *Franchise*, which was making very good progress, won over the hunters; this frigate returned to our ports. Captain Landolphe had not, as he believed, encountered an English squadron. Among the vessels sighted on the morning of July 4, there was only one warship, the *Belliqueux*. The others, called the *Exeter*, the *Bombay Castle*, the *Coutts*, and the *Neptune*, belonged to the East India Company. The *Medea* had surrendered to the *Exeter* and the *Bombay Castle*. The error committed by the commander of the division, who had taken ships of the East India Company for vessels, the promptitude with which the signal had been made which left each captain free to manoeuvre for the safety of his ship, had brought about these unfortunate results.³¹

The *Pallas* of forty, Captain Epron, was attacked, in the Channel, by an English division. Completely disabled, sinking in the water, this frigate lowered its flag; the *Pallas* had forty men killed or seriously wounded. This frigate had defended itself with an energy that honored Captain Epron, his officers and his crew. The French navy also lost, during the year, the corvettes the *Réolaise*, the *Albanaise*, the *Vedette* and some lower-ranking vessels.

The English were trying to get the royalists to take up arms again. On June 2, 1800, a division, comprising seven vessels, five frigates, a corvette and five large transports, anchored in the bay of Quiberon. It was commanded by the ship captain Sir Edward Pellew. The English ships carried about five thousand men, placed under the orders of General Maitland. The commander-in-chief of the army of Brittany, General Bernadotte, was at Vannes, where his headquarters were established, when he received the news of the presence of an enemy squadron on the coast. His troops, immediately put into motion, advanced, by forced marches, to the threatened points. The English landed small detachments. After destroying several unimportant batteries, capturing the eighteen-man corvette, the *Insolente*, and some small vessels, they withdrew. General Maitland and Sir Edward Pellew had, for a moment, the thought of attacking Belle-Ile, but, learning that there were, at that point, numerous troops, they gave up this enterprise.³²

A few days later, Sir Edward Pellew made his junction with Rear-Admiral Warren. The latter was cruising in the Bay of Biscay with five ships, several frigates and ships carrying troops. The two divisions, placed under the command of Admiral Warren, headed towards the coast of Spain. The aim of the expedition was to destroy the ships *Real-Carlos* and *San-Hermenegilde*, of one hundred and twelve, *San-Fernando* of ninety-six, *Argonauta* of eighty, *San-Antonio* and *San-Agostino*, of seventy-four, which were at Ferrol. The English troops were landed in one of the bays near this port. The commander-in-chief of the British forces, General Pultenay, after having made a reconnaissance, judged that he did not have sufficient forces to carry out this enterprise. The English soldiers returned to their ships. Rear-Admiral Warren led his division to Gibraltar where he placed himself under the orders of Lord Keith. This admiral put to sea on October 2, with twenty-two ships of the line, thirty-seven frigates, and eighty ships, carrying eighteen thousand men, commanded by General Sir Ralph Abercromby. The English fleet anchored on the 4th in the Bay of Cadiz. The governor, Don Thomas de Morla, responded by refusing the summons made to him to surrender the city and the ships anchored in the port. An epidemic of typhus was causing great ravages among the population of Cadiz and its suburbs. Lord Keith and Sir Ralph Abercromby, fearing that their troops would be decimated by disease, returned to Gibraltar. The Court of London had employed great means and had achieved none of the results it had sought.³³

These three expeditions were considered, in England, as failures.

The twenty-gun *Danaé*, belonging to the squadron that was blockading the port of Brest, fell into our hands in the following circumstances. This corvette was, on April 15, under observation in the *Iroise* when, around nine o'clock in the evening, several men of the crew and some French prisoners rushed onto the quarterdeck. The mutineers seized the officer on duty and threw him into the false deck. The captain of the corvette was wounded while trying to open a passage through the rebels. On the 16th, at daybreak, the *Danaé* dropped anchor in the bay of Camaret. The leader of the sedition was a sailor, named Jackson, who had been secretary to the famous Parker, while the latter commanded the Thames squadron in 1797. Jackson sent a boat on board the corvette *Colombe*, anchored in the bay, to inform the officer in command of the events of the night. The lieutenant of the French corvette went, with some men, on board the *Danae*, of which he took possession. During the year 1800, our adversaries lost three vessels by accident. One of them, the three-decker, the *Queen Charlotte*, burned at sea; the *Queen Charlotte* was the ship of Lord Keith, the commander-in-chief of the naval forces of Great Britain in the Mediterranean. This three-decker had left Leghorn, on March 16, to go to the island of Capraia. The next morning, the *Queen Charlotte*, which had made little progress during the night, was a few leagues from the port, when, from land, the vessel was seen in flames. Only one hundred and fifty-six persons could be saved; six hundred and seventy-three perished.³⁴

Admiral Keith had remained in Leghorn with an aide-de-camp and a few sailors. The *Repulse* of sixty-four, was shipwrecked on the coast of Brittany; the crew reached the land and was taken prisoner. On November 4, the *Marlborough* of seventy-four, ran aground on rocks between Groix and Belle-Ile. The sea was rough; the ship punctured very quickly. The crew was picked up by the *Captain* of seventy-four, who was sailing in convoy with the *Marlborough*.

The hostilities between France and the United States were not very active. Nevertheless, the difficulties existing between the two powers not having been smoothed out, the state of war remained. On February 1, 1800, the forty-eight gun American frigate, the *Constellation*, encountered, a few leagues west of Guadeloupe, the forty-gun frigate, the *Vengeance*, Captain Pitot. The action began at eight o'clock in the evening; around one o'clock in the morning, the two frigates separated. The *Vengeance* had all its masts razed; the *Constellation* had lost its mainmast. The latter went to Jamaica and the French frigate to Curaçao. The losses of the *Constellation* amounted to fifteen men killed and twenty-three wounded; the *Vengeance* had fourteen killed and forty wounded. This frigate set sail on August 10 to return to France. On the night of the 19th, it encountered the English frigate, the *Seine*; After three successive engagements, the *Vengeance*, having only its mainmast left, sinking under water, without ammunition, lowered its flag. The naval artillery Lieutenant Moreau was among the dead; the ship's Lieutenant Ayreau, the Ensign Marcou and six army officers, passengers on board the *Vengeance*, had been wounded.³⁵

Captain Pitot's report did not indicate the losses suffered by the crew.

On October 12, at 23 degrees north latitude and 53 degrees west longitude, the corvette *Berceau*, Captain Senez, encountered the American frigate *Boston*, armed with thirty-two twelve-pounder guns and twelve thirty-two carronades. The French corvette carried twenty-two eight-pounders and two twelve-pounder carronades. The action began, on both sides, with extreme vivacity. *Berceau* put up energetic resistance to its adversary; the American frigate, forced to repair its damage, ceased fighting for a few hours. The engagement, after having been resumed, was once more interrupted, but the disproportion of forces was too great for the issue of the fight to be doubtful. The *Berceau*, joined a third time, the next morning, lowered its flag; shortly after, its foremast and mainmast fell. This affair, one of the most vigorous of that time, did the greatest honor to Lieutenant Senez, to the officers and to the crew of this corvette. The *Boston* had fifteen men out of action; seven were killed or died from their wounds. The *Berceau* lost four men including an officer, Lieutenant Fraboulet. This corvette had, in addition, seventeen wounded.

The President of the United States had sent plenipotentiaries to France to end the dispute existing between the two republics. A treaty, dated September 30, that is to say signed twelve days before the engagement of the *Berceau* and the frigate *Boston*, had put an end to the difficulties which had existed since 1793 between France and the United States.³⁶

It was agreed that the warships, taken on both sides, would be returned. The exercise of the right of visit, the designation of objects of war contraband and the conditions necessary to establish the reality of the blockades, had been regulated by precise stipulations.

The islands of Gorée and Curaçao, the first belonging to France and the second to Holland, were taken by the English.

II

The violence that England exercised against the neutrals, since the beginning of the war, caused an irritation, each day greater, among the secondary maritime powers. On July 25, 1800, a Danish frigate, the *Freya*, Captain Krabbe, escorting six merchant ships, encountered, in the Channel, an English division, composed of three frigates, a corvette and a lugger. The commander of this division, Captain Baker, informed Captain Krabbe that he intended to visit his convoy. After affirming that the vessels, sailing under his escort, were not loaded with any contraband of war, the Danish captain declared that he would oppose by force the execution of this measure. True to his word, he fired, with cannonballs, on an English boat which was heading towards the Danish ships.³⁷

The three frigates retaliated and the action began; after having sustained, for some time, this unequal combat, Captain Krabbe had his flag lowered. The *Freya* was taken to the Dunes harbor with the ships she was escorting. She had two men killed and five wounded; the English frigates the *Nemesis* and the *Arrow* each had two killed and a few wounded. Several incidents of this kind had already occurred. In 1798, Swedish merchant ships, escorted by a frigate of their nation, had been captured by the English. In December 1799, a Danish frigate, having opposed, by force, the visit of its convoy, had been taken to Gibraltar with the ships it was escorting. The difficulties raised by this event had not been smoothed out when the *Freya* affair occurred. The irritation was very lively in Denmark; that power addressed energetic complaints to the British government. Far from accepting them, the Court of London complained haughtily of the conduct of Captain Krabbe. The latter, in firing on an English boat, had committed, towards a friendly nation, an act of hostility which nothing could justify. Prompt satisfaction was demanded from Denmark, for the insult made to the flag of Great Britain.

Mr. Merry, Ambassador of His Britannic Majesty at Copenhagen, confidently awaited the disavowal of Captain Krabbe's conduct and the apologies to which his government was entitled. The search, on the high seas, of merchant ships and their cargoes, said Mr. Merry in one of the numerous notes exchanged, on this subject, with Count Bernstorff, is the incontestable right of every nation at war.³⁸

The warships and privateers of the belligerent powers, replied Count Bernstorff, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, have the right to visit neutral vessels in order to ascertain their nationality and the regularity of their expeditions. When the papers are found in order, no further visit can be made. The authority of the government, in whose name these documents have been drawn up, gives the belligerent power all security, as regards the nature of the cargo.

The question posed in these terms did not present a solution. England hoped that the haughty language of her ambassador would intimidate Denmark; she was able to convince herself that this result would not be achieved. Such was the situation when it was learned in London that the Emperor of Russia, Paul I, was taking active steps to form an alliance between the maritime powers of the North, with the aim of safeguarding the rights of neutrals. England wanted to end the dispute existing between her and Denmark. Lord Withworth, former ambassador to St. Petersburg, was sent on an extraordinary mission to Copenhagen; a squadron of ten ships accompanied him. The new negotiator addressed a note to Count Bernstorff in which the demands of England were clearly stated. "Notwithstanding the expressions," said Lord Withworth, "used by His Danish Majesty's minister, in reference to the detention of the frigate *Freya* and her convoy, His Majesty cannot yet even persuade himself that it was really by His Danish Majesty's orders that peace and good harmony were so suddenly interrupted, or that a Danish officer could have acted in accordance with his instructions, in commencing hostilities against his dominions by the premeditated and unprovoked attack on an English man-of-war bearing His Majesty's flag and sailing in British seas."³⁹

He added a little further: "The blood of His Majesty's brave sailors has been shed, the honor of his flag insulted almost in sight of his own coasts, and these proceedings are supported by raising doubts about incontestable rights, founded on the most obvious principles of the law of nations, from which His Majesty can never depart and whose calm but resolute maintenance is indispensable to the existence of the dearest interests of his empire." "Nothing equals the astonishment," replied Count Bernstorff, "with which His Majesty has just seen, by the note which the undersigned had the honour to receive from Lord Withworth, that the British government, in order to refuse him the satisfaction which is obviously due to him, retorts the demand against him, by imputing to him, without scruple, an aggression, the reproach of which is annihilated by the simplest examination of the fact. It is in fact to confuse the clearest ideas, and to invert the most natural and least equivocal meaning of things and words, to wish to consider as an aggression, and a premeditated aggression, a legal and provoked resistance to an attack given gratuitously to the rights and honour of an independent flag. Demonstrations become superfluous when the fact speaks, and Denmark does not fear to appeal, in this respect, to the judgment of all the impartial powers of Europe. If it were possible to suppose an idea of aggression or hostile intentions against Great Britain, His Majesty would not hesitate to disavow them loudly; but this possibility does not exist."⁴⁰

And the English government itself, if it weighs the circumstances calmly and without prejudice, could not have any suspicion in this regard." Things had not changed face and each kept its positions. Besides, all discussion was useless; England did not want to be convinced. In its relations with neutrals, it admitted no other rule than their submission to its will. Unable to overcome the resistance of Denmark, and pressed, on the other hand, by his government, to conclude this affair, Lord Withworth gave in, but without committing the future. It was agreed that the Danish frigate and its convoy would be repaired at England's expense and released. The question of principle was reserved; it was to be debated in London, later. Until then, Denmark had undertaken not to provide escorts to its merchant fleets.

On hearing of the entry into the Sound of the squadron accompanying Lord Withworth, Paul I had ordered an embargo on English ships in Russian ports. He had also sequestered the capital belonging to British subjects "as security for the damage that Russian commerce might suffer from Great Britain, whose designs remained unknown." The Emperor of Russia revoked these measures when he learned of the result of Lord Withworth's mission. Although the solution reached was only provisional, he believed that the Court of London was ready to grant the satisfaction requested by Denmark. However, on August 28, 1800, Paul I invited Prussia, Denmark and Sweden to renew the armed neutrality convention of 1780.⁴¹

These powers did not seem determined to engage in such a serious matter; new acts of violence committed by the English navy put an end to their hesitations. On September 3, 1800, the Swedish galley, the *Hofnung*, was heading for Barcelona, which it was not far from. The sun was setting when the *Hofnung* was boarded by eight boats belonging to two British naval vessels, the ship the *Monarch* and the frigate the *Niger*, cruising along the coast. The Swedish crew was relegated to the interior of the galley. The captain of the *Niger*, who commanded the expedition, continued to run towards Barcelona, towing the *Hofnung* with his boats. He was thus able to approach the entrance to the port without being recognized. Having arrived at a short distance from the corvettes *La Paz* and *La Esmeralda*, the English, abandoning the Swedish galley, steered, by force of oars, towards these vessels; without giving the Spaniards time to reconnoiter, they seized the two corvettes and towed them out to sea. This expedition cost the enemy only three men killed and five wounded. On the Spanish ships, the losses amounted to three killed and twenty-one wounded. The Court of Madrid hastened to bring to the attention of all the European cabinets the events which had taken place at Barcelona. It addressed energetic complaints to Stockholm against the conduct of the Captain of the *Hofnung*. Sweden had no difficulty in proving that there was, in this affair, no other culprit than the British navy. The English having seized the *Hofnung*, the Swedish flag had played, on September 3, in front of Barcelona, only an involuntary role.⁴²

At the same time, a Prussian ship, loaded with wood, was stopped in the Texel by an English privateer and taken to Cuxhaven. The court of Berlin made very strong complaints. England, always harsh and haughty with nations from which it had nothing to fear, such as Sweden and Denmark, showed itself ready to make to Prussia all the concessions that this power could desire. The court of Berlin found itself in great embarrassment. It had the desire to remain on good terms with England; on the other hand, it feared to displease the Emperor of Russia. This last feeling prevailed; Prussia occupied Cuxhaven. Sweden, Denmark and Prussia accepted the proposal made by Paul I to form a coalition against England intended to defend the rights of the secondary navies. The convention, which consecrated the union of these four powers, was concluded, by separate acts, on December 16, between Russia, Sweden and Denmark, and, on the 18th, between Russia and Prussia. The convention of armed neutrality of 1800 recalled that of 1780; it contained, in addition, some new provisions. A special enumeration had been made of objects called contraband of war. In 1780, reliance had been placed on this point on the somewhat vague designations existing in the treaties in force at that time. Finally, the new convention did not admit that merchant ships, sailing under the escort of a warship, could be visited.

England, which would not shrink from any violence to defend its interests, resolved to strike Denmark before the squadrons of Sweden and Russia, held back by the ice, were in a position to come to its aid.⁴³

Admiral Parker, with Nelson as lieutenant, set sail on March 12, 1801, from Yarmouth harbor. The fleet, placed under his command, consisted of twenty vessels, four frigates, a few avisos and a flotilla of bombards and fire ships. The English anchored on the 21st at the entrance to the Sound; on the 30th, they set sail to force this passage. As a result of a negligence that is difficult to explain, Sweden had not raised batteries on the part of its coast facing Denmark. There were barely a few guns of a small caliber above Helsingford. Admiral Parker's squadron, bending its course towards the Swedish coast, passed out of cannon range of the fortress of Kronembourg. It anchored, the same day, a few leagues above the capital of Denmark. The British fleet had to enter the Royal Pass in order to reach Copenhagen; the Danes had accumulated, in the northern part of this pass, extremely powerful means of defence. Admirals Parker and Nelson decided to turn it, that is to say, to attack it by heading from south to north. On April 1, Lord Nelson, taking advantage of a fine north-north-west breeze, crossed the great pass with twelve vessels, some frigates, bomb ships, fire ships and gunboats. The great pass, situated to the east of the Royal Pass, is separated from it by a bank, called the Middel-Grund. Nelson anchored his ships off Amack Island.

On the 2nd, the wind having become favourable, the English squadron sailed up the Royal Pass from south to north. It took up position parallel to the Danish line of defence. This line, composed of ships of all ranks, floating batteries and gunboats, was supported by works established on land.⁴⁴

Admiral Parker intended, with the eight ships he had kept, to create a diversion by attacking the northern part of the royal pass. On April 2, having the wind and tide against him, he was forced to anchor out of range of the batteries' cannon. The detachment, placed under the orders of Admiral Nelson, was therefore able to fight the Danes alone. The action began around ten o'clock in the morning; they fought, on both sides, with real ferocity. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the English fire acquired a marked superiority. Several Danish ships lowered their flag. Negotiations having been established between Lord Nelson and the Crown Prince who presided over the defence of Copenhagen, a suspension of arms was decided. The Danes had suffered great losses. Their ships, almost all of a small sample, had found themselves powerless against ships of the line. Nevertheless, the success of the English was more apparent than real; some of their ships were stranded on the Middel-Grund, others had serious damage. The British squadron could not maintain the position it occupied. The winds blowing from the south, it was obliged, in order to leave the royal pass, to draw up close the batteries placed at the entrance to this pass, on the north side. Now, these batteries, which were powerfully armed, had not suffered. The suspension of arms, followed by a truce of twenty-four hours, was therefore very favourable to the English; it allowed them to refloat their ships and rejoin Admiral Parker. Two vessels, one of which was flying Nelson's flag, ran aground under the guns of the Danish batteries.⁴⁵

We can see the difficulties that the English would have had in getting out of this pass, if the fire had continued. On April 9, Admiral Parker signed an armistice with Denmark, the duration of which was set at fourteen weeks.

The death of Paul I, which occurred on March 23, 1801, delivered England from the fears that the confederation of the northern powers had inspired in it. The new Emperor of Russia abandoned the policy that had brought glory to Empress Catherine and that his father had followed. He made it known to the Court of London that he was willing to renew friendly relations with it. The embargo, placed on English ships, was lifted. On June 17, 1801, Alexander concluded a treaty with Great Britain in which the principles which formed the basis of the new armed neutrality were completely disregarded. One of the articles of this treaty allowed the English to seize enemy property on neutral ships; finally, the right to visit merchant ships sailing under escort was no longer contested. England had been willing to admit that this right would not be exercised by privateers. Prussia deserted the cause of armed neutrality no less promptly than Russia. Denmark and Sweden were unable to fight against England; these two powers acceded to the convention of June 17, 1801, in March of the following year.⁴⁶

BOOK II

Measures taken to rescue the army of Egypt. Ships sent from our ports and from the ports of the coast of Italy. - Rear-Admiral Ganteaume leaves Brest with a division of seven ships to go to Egypt. Combat of the French frigate the *Bravoure* and the English frigate the *Concorde*. - Capture of the cutter the *Spiritly* and the frigate *Success*. Entry of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume into Toulon. This general officer heads again for Alexandria. The French division returns to Toulon. Third sortie of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume. - The French division appears in front of the island of Elba. Return of the ships the *Formidable*, the *Indomptable*, the *Desaix* and the frigate *Créole* to Toulon. Rear-Admiral Ganteaume continued his route to Egypt with four ships. He anchored on the coast, west of Alexandria, in order to disembark the passing troops. The arrival of the enemy forced him to set sail. - Capture of the ship *Swiftsure*. - Return of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume to Toulon. Battle of the *Africaine* and the *Phæbe*. Capture of the corvette *Sans-Pareille*. Rear-Admiral Linois set sail from Toulon with the ships *Formidable* and *Indomptable*, each eighty, the *Desaix*, of seventy-four, and the frigate *Muiron*, of thirty-six. Capture of the brig *Speedy*. - Battle of Algeciras. Capture of the English ship *Hannibal*. - Arrival of a Franco-Spanish division at Algeciras. The combined squadron headed for Cadiz. English squadron sets sail. Fire on the ships *Real Carlos* and *San Hermenegilde*. - Capture of the French ship *Saint Antoine*. Battle of the *Formidable*. The disabled *Venerable* runs aground. Entry of the *Formidable* into Cadiz. - Arrival of the Franco-Spanish squadron in this port. - Rewards granted to Admiral Linois' squadron. The corvette *Bull Dog* is recaptured by the English. The Egyptian army, receiving no aid, is forced to capitulate. Construction of flotilla vessels. Their meeting at Boulogne. - Admiral Nelson in front of this port, on August 3 and 15. Peace is signed with England.

I

The consular government, very concerned about the situation of the Egyptian army, was actively seeking ways to help it.⁴⁷

At the beginning of the year 1801, circumstances were pressing. It was known that the British troops, placed under the command of General Abercromby, about eighteen thousand men strong, were destined to operate in Egypt in concert with the Turks. Our army, weakened by combat and disease, was bound to succumb. An expedition was prepared in Brest, in the greatest secrecy. Seven ships and two frigates, commanded by Rear Admiral Ganteaume, received the order to put to sea for an unknown destination. England had, in front of the Texel, sufficient forces to block the ships of Holland. A squadron observed the Franco-Spanish army anchored in the harbor of Brest. Since the disaster of Aboukir, the English were convinced that we could undertake nothing in the Mediterranean. Nevertheless, as they were preparing to make a landing in Egypt, a squadron of sixteen vessels, at the head of which was placed Admiral Keith, was in this sea. Some of these vessels were cruising before Alexandria, under the orders of Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Bickerton; five were kept, with Admiral Warren, between Cadiz, Gibraltar and Minorca. A large number of frigates and corvettes were stationed on the roads from Toulon and the different ports of the coast of Italy to Alexandria. Finally, it was known that Admiral Keith was to proceed, with the greater part of his squadron, to the coasts of Asia Minor, where the ships carrying the troops intended for the expedition to Egypt were being assembled. Such was the position of the enemy forces when the departure of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume was decided. If this admiral, managing to conceal his march from the blockade squadron, succeeded in entering the Mediterranean without being seen by Admiral Warren, he had some chance of leading an impatiently awaited reinforcement to Egypt.⁴⁸

Indeed, our squadron, leaving behind the forces which were cruising between Cadiz and Gibraltar, could arrive on the coasts of Egypt before the return of Admiral Keith. In this hypothesis, it would have found, in front of Alexandria, only light vessels or a small number of ships.

The division of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume included the vessels *Indivisible*, *Indomptable* and *Formidable*, of eighty, the *Desaix*, *Jean-Bart*, *Constitution* and *Dix-Août*, of seventy-four, the frigates *Créole* of forty and *Bravoure* of thirty-six. Five thousand soldiers, munitions and war material were embarked on these vessels. Consequently, there were, on each ship, besides the crew, more than seven hundred soldiers, civilian passengers and a considerable cargo. In order to better deceive public opinion as to the true destination of Admiral Ganteaume, employees destined for Saint-Domingue with their families were admitted on the ships of his division. On January 23, 1801, Admiral Ganteaume, taking advantage of a north-easterly gale which had blown the squadron of the Count of Saint-Vincent out to sea, left Brest. The wind was blowing violently and the sea was rough. Twenty-four hours after its departure, the squadron was dispersed; the flagship *Indivisible* found itself alone with the *Créole*. The first days of this crossing were extremely difficult. We can easily see the state of these vessels, encumbered with troops and equipment, leaving the port during a gale to escape the English cruise, and obliged to take combat measures since they were exposed to encountering the enemy the next day if not the very day of their departure.⁴⁹

All the ships suffered serious damage. Two vessels lost their main topmast; others had their sails blown away. The lugger *Vautour* was on the point of sinking. *Indivisible* was heading towards the rendezvous, set fifty leagues west of Cape Finisterre, when a ship was reported. It was the corvette *Incendiaire*, with twenty-eight guns; this corvette was taken and sunk.

On the 27th, the ships *Indomptable*, *Desaix*, *Constitution*, *Dix-Août*, *Jean-Bart* and the frigate *Bravoure* were reunited. The same day, at sunset, about twenty-five leagues west of Cape Finisterre, two sails were sighted. The *Bravoure* was ordered to reconnoitre them. The ships in sight were a Swedish merchantman and the forty-four-gun English frigate, the *Concorde*, Captain Burton. The *Bravoure*, having made signals to the *Concorde*, to which the latter did not respond, approached within earshot. As soon as the two ships had hailed each other and acknowledged themselves to be enemies, the action began. After a very lively fight, which lasted about half an hour, the two frigates separated. The *Bravoure* made way to rejoin her division. She had thirteen killed, including an officer, Ensign Kercron, and twenty-four wounded. Captain Louis Dordelin was among the latter; he had had part of his hand blown off by a Biscayan [a large caliber rifle]. According to English reports, the *Concorde* had four killed and nineteen wounded.⁵⁰

It is difficult to decide which of these two ships should be given the advantage in this encounter. Captain Burton claimed that his adversary no longer firing, he himself had ceased his fire, supposing that the French frigate had been brought up. Shortly afterwards, he had seen the *Bravoure* laying sail. Rear Admiral Ganteaume, reporting to the Minister on this affair, said, based on the report of the French captain, that "after half an hour of combat, within pistol range, the *Concorde* having managed to avoid the boarding that Captain Dordelin had attempted, had moved away and fled by forcing sails. Captain Dordelin, already very far from his division, could not pursue it, and he maneuvered to rally his commander. "Captain Burton had seen, at sunset, the squadron of which the frigate he was fighting was a part. Half an hour after the beginning of the action, his ship being very much stripped, he probably asked himself if it was prudent to prolong this engagement. He said to himself that if, the next day at daybreak, he was not in a condition to make sail, he might be chased and taken by the ships with which the French frigate was sailing, to which he was lending the beam at that moment. We must therefore believe that, under the influence of these various considerations, Captain Burton, having before him a determined adversary, thought it prudent to move away.

On January 30, Rear-Admiral Ganteaume was rallied by the *Formidable*; the next day, he had the good fortune to see all the ships of his squadron with the exception of the *Vautour*. On February 9, he crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in broad daylight. The next day, our hunters [chasseurs] captured the cutter *Spritly* which was sunk.⁵¹

Among the ships anchored in the harbor of Gibraltar, only one, the frigate *Success*, was in a condition to sail. This frigate set sail to observe our movements. Its captain intended, in the event that he became certain that we were going to Egypt, to go ahead of us in order to bring this news to Admiral Keith. On the 11th, the *Success* was sighted and chased by our ships; the day of the 12th passed without this ship being able to be reached. In the afternoon of the 13th, our best sailors arrived close enough to the English frigate to cannonade it. After the first volleys, the latter lowered its flag. We had news of the enemy from the *Success* and the *Spiritly*. Rear-Admiral Ganteaume learned that Lord Keith would soon appear on the coast of Egypt, where Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Bickerton was already with a few ships. It seemed difficult to him not to encounter forces several times superior to his own. Having passed Gibraltar in broad daylight, his presence in the Mediterranean could not have been ignored by Admiral Warren. He supposed that this general officer would receive prompt reinforcements and would set out in pursuit. Other considerations acted on his mind. The damage to the masts and rigging, caused during the gale that the squadron had received on its departure from Brest, had been imperfectly repaired; finally, the sanitary condition of the division was poor. Consequently, Rear Admiral Ganteaume considered that his ships, with masts in poor condition, weakened crews, batteries cluttered with equipment, were unfit to take chase, in the event that he found himself in the presence of superior forces, or to fight if circumstances required it.⁵²

He set sail for Toulon where he anchored on February 18.

The admiral, in informing the minister of his arrival, described the situation of his squadron in the following terms. "The *Indivisible* had lost two topmasts and had no spare. The mainmast's elongates were broken and they had not been able to support the new topmast. The *Desaix* had its bowsprit cracked. The *Constitution* and the *Jean-Bart* were in the same situation as the *Indivisible*, neither having, after their dismasting, a spare topmast. The *Formidable* and the *Indomptable* had each had one of their anchors removed from the side on the night of their departure. They had been obliged to cut the cable, but both had had their edge pushed in at the waterline, which could not be repaired securely at sea. Finally, all the ships without exception were deprived of ropes to a worrying extent, not having had a single spare piece when they left Brest, and the ropes that were in place were all bad and in a position to compromise, at any moment, the progress and safety of the ships. This situation, said the admiral in conclusion, increased my concerns."

Rear-Admiral Ganteaume received the order to leave as quickly as possible for his destination. He set sail on March 19. At the time of setting sail, the admiral wrote to the minister: "It has been impossible for us to complete the crews. We have exhausted all means. The maritime prefect has given us three hundred men of marine artillery troops, and yet we are leaving with sixty or eighty men less on each ship, and unfortunately it is the sailors who are lacking."⁵³

A few days after setting sail, Rear Admiral Ganteaume decided once again to put in. Two ships had collided; both had suffered serious damage. On April 5, the *Indivisible*, the *Dix-Août*, the *Constitution*, the *Jean-Bart*, the *Indomptable*, the *Formidable*, the *Desaix*, the *Créole* and the *Bravoure* anchored in the harbor of Toulon.

Admiral Warren had been warned on February 8, off Cadiz, where he was cruising with a few ships, of Rear Admiral Ganteaume's entry into the Mediterranean. He headed for Minorca where he anchored on the 20th; he set sail again on the 24th. Having encountered very bad weather, Admiral Warren was obliged to return to Mahon to repair his ships. On March 4th, this general officer set sail from Minorca for the second time; he had with him four ships and a frigate. On the 7th, after communicating with one of his avisos who brought him orders from the British Admiralty, he headed for Naples. Admiral Warren was returning to our coast with seven ships, including two sixty-fours, and the frigate *Mercury*, when, on March 25th, off the coast of Sardinia, his scouts spotted Admiral Ganteaume's squadron at a great distance. The following day, the 26th, it was no longer in sight.

Rear-Admiral Ganteaume put to sea again on April 25, with orders to appear on the coasts of the island of Elba before going to Egypt. Conforming to this first part of his instructions, he cannonaded Porto-Ferraio, encouraged the occupation of this place by our troops, then prepared to set sail for Alexandria.⁵⁴

As a result of the conditions in which the beginning of the campaign had been accomplished, the sanitary state of the squadron had never been satisfactory. An epidemic broke out among the crews and the passing troops at the moment when the squadron was about to leave for Egypt. The admiral sent back three ships, the *Formidable*, the *Indomptable* and the *Desaix*, and the frigate the *Créole* with the sick of the division. He took, from these ships, the able-bodied sailors and soldiers, and, with four ships of seventy-four, a frigate, a corvette and some transports, he headed for Alexandria. The lucky chances which would have allowed us to reach, without meeting the enemy, a favorable point to throw the troops ashore, no longer existed. The English fleet, which had left Macri Bay on the coast of Asia Minor on February 23, had anchored in Aboukir Bay on March 1. Lord Keith was keeping an active watch on the coast. On June 5, the French division chased a vessel that it could not reach; it was the frigate *Pique*, which covered itself with sails to join Lord Keith. On the 7th, the French admiral detached the corvette *Héliopolis* in order to obtain some information on the enemy's position. On the 9th, at daybreak, this corvette arrived near Alexandria. The English cruiser was a few leagues to the west of this port. Warned by *Pique* of the imminent arrival of a French division, Lord Keith had gone to meet it. This circumstance saved the *Héliopolis*, which was able to enter Alexandria before two ships, detached in pursuit, had managed to reach it. Rear-Admiral Ganteaume, not seeing the *Héliopolis* return, supposed that this vessel had fallen into the hands of the enemy. He decided to put the troops ashore to the west of Alexandria.⁵⁵

His instructions instructed him to do so, if he did not think it prudent to present himself before this port. The French division approached the land and anchored; before the necessary preparations for the landing were completed, Lord Keith's squadron appeared. The French set sail by cutting their cables; the next day, the English were out of sight.

Rear-Admiral Ganteaume once again took the road to Toulon. On the 24th, between Candia and the coast of Egypt, the French squadron sighted, at daybreak, a large vessel which it chased away. It was the *Swiftsure* of seventy-four which was going to Malta to reinforce Rear-Admiral Warren's squadron. About three o'clock in the afternoon the English vessel was joined by the *Indivisible* and the *Dix-Août*. After an hour's fight the *Swiftsure* lowered her flag; at this moment the *Constitution* and the *Jean-Bart* came within gunshot. The *Swiftsure's* losses were very light; they amounted to only two killed and eight wounded. There were two killed and two wounded on board the *Indivisible*, and six killed and twenty-three wounded on board the *Dix-Août*. The *Swiftsure* had her masts, sails, and rigging damaged; nevertheless, six hours after her capture, this vessel was in a condition to follow the French squadron. The *Swiftsure* could do nothing against four vessels, but truth obliges us to say that she did not push her resistance very far. We must add that Lord Keith had taken part of her crew; its effectives, when it was taken, did not exceed five hundred men. Rear-Admiral Ganteaume anchored on July 22, in the harbor of Toulon. Two ships, the *Indivisible* and the *Dix-Août* had fought the *Swiftsure*.⁵⁶

The consular government granted each of these vessels two grenades, two rifles and four boarding axes of honour.

Nothing will give an idea, both more accurate and sadder, of the situation of the navy at this time, than the following passage from a letter that Rear-Admiral Ganteaume wrote to the minister, after having received the order to put his vessels in a condition to put back to sea. "I call your attention once again to the dreadful state in which the sailors are left, in arrears of pay for fifteen months, naked or covered in rags, poorly fed, discouraged, finally collapsed under the weight of the deepest and most humiliating misery. It would be horrible to make them undertake, in this state, a long and undoubtedly painful winter campaign." The admiral did not paint a less sad picture of the situation of the officers. These, receiving neither pay nor table allowance, lived in conditions which lowered them in their own eyes and took away from them any consideration on the part of the crews.

II

During the course of the unsuccessful expedition which we have just reported, several vessels had left our ports, going to Alexandria with troops and munitions. One of these vessels, the frigate *l'Africaine* of forty-four, Captain Saunier, had left Rochefort, on February 14, at the same time as the *Régénérée*, but the bad weather had almost immediately separated it from its convoy.⁵⁷

On the 19th, the *Africaine*, which had already crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, was sighted and chased by the English frigate the *Phæbe*. The latter had a great advantage in speed over the French frigate. It did not take long to join it and the fight began. Two and a half hours later, the *Africaine*, riddled with cannonballs, sinking low, lowered its flag. She had one hundred and twenty-seven killed and one hundred and seventy-six wounded. The defense of the *Africaine* had been heroic. Captain Saunier, his officers, General Desfourneaux and most of the officers of the army had been hit by enemy fire. Captain Saunier, seriously wounded, died before the end of the fight. The *Africaine* had a reduced crew and four hundred soldiers as passengers; she was carrying considerable equipment and a large quantity of ammunition. The *Phæbe* and the *Africaine* were two vessels of equal strength. While the losses of the French frigate amounted, as we have said, to one hundred and twenty-seven dead and one hundred and seventy-six wounded, the *Phæbe* had only two killed and twelve wounded. The captain of the *Africaine* had, it is true, given the order to fire to dismast. Considering the fight, with a frigate of the same rank, as impossible, owing to the conditions in which his vessel found itself, he hoped that a lucky cannonball, hitting the mast of the *Phæbe* and delaying its progress, would allow him to escape an unequal fight. In any case, assuming that Captain Saunier, wanting to avoid an encounter whose outcome he foresaw, had ordered the dismasting to be fired upon, the results obtained clearly indicated that the *Africaine* had no gunners. The mast, the rigging, and the sails of the *Phæbe* had been damaged, but not a single mast had fallen.⁵⁸

When all the details of this affair were known , the First Consul instructed the Minister of the Navy "to draw the attention of officers of all ranks to the inconvenience of always wanting to pull to dismast , and how true is , in all circumstances , this principle that one must begin by doing the most harm possible to one's enemy".

We will give a new proof of the ignorance which presided over our armaments. The corvette the *Sans - Pareille* , of twenty cannons , had left Toulon to go to Alexandria . It was loaded with cannonballs, which made it neither a fast ship nor a good sea vessel . The day after her sortie, this corvette was chased by a frigate. She threw some of her cannonballs into the sea to lighten her load; nevertheless, after a nine-hour chase, she was caught by the enemy. The *Sans-Pareille* found herself, for a moment, ahead of the English frigate and in a position to send her an enfilade broadside. The French captain was unable to take advantage of this opportunity, which might have allowed him to disarm his adversary and make it impossible for him to pursue her. Almost the entire crew was seasick. The *Sans-Pareille* lowered her flag. The captain of this corvette, Lieutenant Renault, made the following statement before the court martial called to judge him: "I have omitted, in my report and in my journal, to speak of the situation of my crew, but it is not inappropriate, I believe, to present it to you. Three-quarters of them were sick with seasickness from the time they left Cape Sepet until they arrived at Mahon."⁵⁹

Add to that the ill will, and a panic terror that seized my crew, at the sight of the frigate. Almost all believed that it was a ship. Add to that also that they had all been wet by the sea, for twenty-eight hours, without having any clothes to change into, since I could only obtain ten changes for the whole crew. "

III

It was feared, in Paris, that the English would want to attempt some new landing in Holland. Maritime and military precautions were taken to face this eventuality. Rear-Admiral de Leissègues took command of the naval forces assembled in the first maritime district. Admiral de Winter was placed at the head of the Batavian fleet. The Brest squadron, whose importance grew every day, was given to Vice-Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse. The ships *Argonaute* and *Union* formed, in Lorient, a division commanded by Rear-Admiral Bedout. A decree of March 2 called Admiral Bruix to the command of a squadron in armament at Rochefort. It was stated, in this decree, that the maritime prefects, the land and sea officers of the ports and colonies where he would land would be placed under his orders. The minister ordered Admiral Bruix to go to Cadiz with five ships, two frigates and fifteen hundred soldiers.⁶⁰

He was to gather, in this port, under his flag, five Spanish ships and the division of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir-Lepelley. The latter directed the armament of six ships, ceded by the court of Madrid to France. It was hoped, in Paris, that Admiral Bruix, at the head of all these forces, could intercept the convoys intended for Abercromby's army. Rochefort's squadron was rallied, on March 10, by the *Argonaute* and the *Union*.

When the ships, which brought back the many sick of Rear-Admiral Ganteaume's division, had arrived in Toulon, Admiral Bruix had not put to sea. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir-Lepelley had made the greatest efforts to successfully complete the difficult mission with which he was charged. Nevertheless, the armament of the six vessels, given by Spain to France, had made little progress. Admiral Linois was ordered to go to Cadiz with the *Indomptable* and the *Formidable*, of eighty, the *Desaix* of seventy-four and the frigate *Muiron* of forty-two. A detachment, comprising infantry and artillery, under the orders of General Devau, was embarked on the ships of his division. Rear-Admiral Linois was to join the Franco-Spanish forces anchored at Cadiz. Having left on June 13 for his new destination, he was, at the beginning of July, at the entrance to the strait. On the 3rd, the brig *Speedy* was captured. The French learned that Admiral Saumarez, who had arrived from England a few days earlier, was cruising off Cadiz with seven ships. Rear-Admiral Linois had been observed by frigates that our best sailors had been unable to reach. He supposed that these ships belonged to Rear-Admiral Warren's division, which was returning to the strait after having fruitlessly pursued Admiral Ganteaume.⁶¹

Seeing superior forces ahead of him, fearing that if he fell back he would meet Admiral Warren, he decided to go to Algeciras where he anchored on July 4. Warned by an officer, sent from Gibraltar in a boat, of the presence of the French division, Admiral Saumarez set sail for the strait. He had six ships with him; the seventh, the *Superb*, was cruising a little further north, on the Spanish coast, with the frigate *La Tamise*. A notice brought these two ships the order to immediately join their admiral. The latter expected to easily defeat Admiral Linois' three ships. On the 6th of July, in the morning, the English squadron, composed of the vessels, the *Caesar* of eighty, the *Pompée*, the *Audacious*, the *Venerable*, the *Hannibal* and the *Spencer*, of seventy-four, appeared at the entrance to the bay. Admiral Saumarez headed towards the French division.

The bay of Algeciras, situated opposite Gibraltar, is open from the north-east to the south-west. Our ships were embossed, presenting the starboard beam to the open sea. They were ranged from north to south in the following order: *Formidable*, *Indomptable*, *Desaix* and *Muiron*. Our line was supported, to the north, by the San-Yago battery, and, to the south, by the Green Island. The first of these positions was armed with five eighteen-pounder guns, and the second with seven twenty-four-pounder guns. The Spaniards had given Admiral Linois the assurance that these two batteries were capable of supporting him. Seven gunboats completed our means of defence. However, our arrangements were not completely completed when the English division was sighted off Cape Carnero. At eight o'clock in the morning, the leader of the English squadron having arrived within cannon range, the action began.⁶²

Shortly after, the combat became general. The enemy ships, as they approached our vessels, found the breeze weak and variable. Thwarted in their maneuvers, they anchored without order off our line. The *Pompée*, carrying the flag of Admiral Saumarez, dropped anchor, within pistol range, by the starboard davit of the *Formidable*. The *Venerable* and the *Audacious* placed themselves abeam of one of the *Indomptable* and the other of the *Desaix*. The *Cæsar* took position between the *Pompée* and the *Venerable*; finally, the *Hannibal* anchored outside these two last vessels, raising one by its davit and the other by its quarter. The *Spencer*, taken by the calm, dropped her anchor, at too great a distance to play an active part in the combat. At nine o'clock, Admiral Saumarez gave the *Hannibal* the signal to sail. He gave the captain of this vessel the order to take, in the north of the bay, an anchorage which would allow him to beat the *Formidable* from front to rear.

From the beginning of the action, Admiral Linois acquired the certainty that the batteries of the Green Island and San-Yago, on whose support he counted, would not protect his division; the fire of the Spaniards was slow and badly directed. Soldiers of infantry and artillery, under the command of General Devau, were immediately disembarked; they armed these two batteries to which the admiral had to send ammunition of which they were completely devoid. "It was thirty hours," wrote Admiral Linois on this subject, "that I had been anchored at Algeciras when I was attacked. I had been assured that the batteries were in perfect order. I had seen one of these batteries which had seemed to me to be so, but nevertheless not a bomb was loaded; during the action, only one empty bomb could be launched."⁶³

One of these batteries lacked powder, the other had wet powder. Militia troops were the only ones charged with this important service for us, and if General Devau had not gone ashore with the French, these batteries would perhaps have been of no help to us." Complying with the orders of Admiral Saumarez, the Captain of the *Hannibal* had set sail. A light breeze from the northeast had risen. Admiral Linois assumed that the enemy's intention was to overtake him head-on and place him between two fires, as had happened at Aboukir. Our ships were anchored in twelve fathoms, and there was a great distance between our line and the land. The signal "to cut the cables and run aground" was hoisted on board the *Formidable*. The French ships, operating the jibs and staysails, set sail, heading south, presenting the port beam to the open sea. The English cut their cables and followed our movement. On both sides there was a very vigorous fight. A cannonball cut the flag halyard of the *Pompée*; it was believed, for a moment, that the ship, on which was the commander-in-chief of the English squadron, had lowered its colours. This hope was not realised; a new flag reappeared on the mizzen-head of the *Pompée*. The batteries of Green Island and San-Yago had been, since we occupied them, firing very heavily from which the English suffered greatly. Admiral Saumarez wanted to seize the first of these positions. Boats, carrying marines and a detachment of sailors, headed for Green Island.⁶⁴

Welcomed, on their arrival, by a very heavy gunfire, they rallied their ships. The *Hannibal*, carried towards the coast by the currents, had run aground. The English ships, anchored without orders, did not support each other. Their fire was visibly weakening. This situation, if prolonged, could lead to the loss of the English squadron. Admiral Saumarez decided to retreat; at half past one, taking advantage of a light land breeze, he moved away, followed by the *Caesar*, the *Spencer*, the *Venerable* and the *Audacious*. The enemy was abandoning the *Hannibal* to us. This ship fought with great energy against the *Formidable* and the battery of San-Yago, but the game was not equal and, at two o'clock, it lowered its flag.

The English had attacked the division of Rear-Admiral Linois with more bravery than skill; remembering Aboukir, they had thrown themselves on our ships without calculation and without reflection. Admiral Nelson, with fourteen ships against thirteen, had destroyed our squadron. Admiral Saumarez had probably said to himself that he could not do less with six ships against three. He was wrong not to notice that the situation was not the same. In the bay of Algeciras, the extremities of our line were protected by batteries, which had not happened at Aboukir. Finally, on August 1, 1798, a very fresh wind had allowed Admiral Nelson's ships to carry out their chief's orders. Admiral Saumarez had found himself, in this respect, in the most unfavorable circumstances. The weakness and variations of the breeze had made all the maneuvers of his ships difficult. In any case, the English squadron emerged from this affair very badly treated; it had one hundred and twenty-one killed, two hundred and forty wounded and thirteen men missing.⁶⁵

These losses were distributed as follows: the *Hannibal* had seventy-five killed, sixty-two wounded and seven missing; the *Pompey* fifteen killed and sixty-nine wounded; the *Caesar* nine killed, twenty-five wounded and seven missing; the *Spencer* six killed and twenty-seven wounded; the *Venerable* eight killed and twenty-five wounded; the *Audacious* eight killed and thirty-two wounded. The masts, rigging and sails of the *Caesar* and especially of the *Pompey* were chopped up by the cannonballs. The *Pompey*, left to its own devices, would not have managed to get away from the battlefield. He would have shared the fate of the *Hannibal*, if numerous boats, coming from Gibraltar, had not taken him in tow.

Our crews, vigorously commanded, had fought well. Their ardor, far from weakening, had increased as the action continued. There had been no need to maneuver, since our ships were stranded. The sea was calm and we fought at close quarters, which made the artillery service easier. The conditions in which we found ourselves were therefore favorable. The resolution, taken by Admiral Linois to detach General Devau with a detachment of infantry and artillery to arm the batteries of Green Island and San-Yago, had decided the success of the day. The losses of the French squadron were great; They amounted, according to the report of Rear Admiral Linois, to one hundred and ninety-three killed and three hundred wounded. The ship captains Laindet-Lalonde and Moncousu, the first commanding the *Formidable* and the second the *Indomptable*, were among the dead. The admiral designated the frigate captains Troude and Touffet to replace them; the frigate captain Lucas took command of the *Hannibal*.⁶⁶

As soon as the enemy had moved away from the battlefield, Rear-Admiral Linois made arrangements to repel a new attack. The ships were refloated; a new line of embossing was formed, comprising the three French ships and the *Hannibal*. The land batteries, placed under the direction of General Devau, were occupied by our soldiers. Rear-Admiral Linois, although victorious, remained in a critical position. His ships had damage, and he did not have, at anchor at Algeciras, any of the means necessary to repair them. The Spanish authorities promised him anchors and gril, which he urgently needed, but they were not given to him. Finally, he was informed that the English were making preparations to set fire to his division. In this situation, it was necessary, as quickly as possible, to reach a safe port. We had, at Cadiz, the six ships ceded by Spain to France, of which Rear-Admiral Dumanoir-Lepelley was directing the armament. One of these ships, the *Saint-Antoine* of seventy-four, was in the roadstead, where there were also six Spanish ships, recently arrived from Ferrol. Admiral Linois had anchored, on July 4, at Algeciras. The English squadron, having entered the strait on the 5th, had attacked us on the morning of the 6th. If the Spanish division, anchored at Cadiz, had felt some hesitation in setting sail, in the presence of the English cruise, it was difficult to admit that it would not have set sail after the departure of Admiral Saumarez. It would have taken part, if it had joined us, in a fight, fought under the most favorable conditions, since there were, at Cadiz, six vessels, two of which had three decks, and three at Algeciras.⁶⁷

We would have fought with nine ships against six. Was it that the Spanish admiral lacked initiative, or did he not have confidence in the ships he commanded? In any case, if the Spanish had let the opportunity to inflict a check on the English pass, they could not refuse to leave Cadiz, while the ships of Admiral Saumarez, unable to hold the sea, had taken refuge in Gibraltar. However, it was only on July 9 that five Spanish ships, including two with three decks, and a French ship set sail, under the superior command of Lieutenant General Moreno. This division anchored, on the 10th, in the harbor of Algeciras. It would have been easy, the day after the battle, to tow our ships to Cadiz. The favorable moment had passed. The English, who had taken advantage of the time with an activity worthy of the greatest praise, were ready to follow us. It was necessary to put Admiral Linois' ships in a state to navigate alone. On the 12th, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, the allies left the harbor of Algeciras. Lieutenant General Moreno and Rear Admiral Linois were on the frigate *Sabine*. The regulations at that time ordered Spanish admirals to pass on a frigate when they found themselves in the presence of the enemy. Lieutenant General Moreno, not having established common signals for the ships of the two nations, was unable to communicate with our division. He asked the French admiral to follow him on board the frigate on which he had raised his flag. Rear Admiral Linois felt a strong reluctance to leave his ship.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, believing that it was his duty to comply with the very urgent request of Admiral Moreno, he embarked on the *Sabine* with the officers of his staff. The Franco-Spanish squadron was composed of the following ships: the *Real-Carlos* and the *San-Hermenegilde*, of one hundred and twelve, the *San-Fernando* of ninety-six, the *Argonauta* of eighty, the *San-Agostino* of seventy-four, the *Formidable* and the *Indomptable*, of eighty, the *Saint-Antoine*, the *Desaix* and the *Hannibal*, of seventy-four and the frigates the *Sabine* and the *Muiron*. The *Hannibal* was towed by the frigate *Indienne*; This ship not being able to round Point Carnero, Captain Lucas received the order to return to the anchorage of Algeciras. As soon as the Franco-Spanish squadron was under sail, Admiral Saumarez set sail from the roadstead of Gibraltar with five ships. The day passed without incident; the Franco-Spanish division sailed almost united. At sunset, Admiral Moreno signaled the order to sail abreast, the frigates ahead; at this moment, the English were to windward, at a great distance. When night fell, the weather became dark and the breeze freshened. The allied ships, not accustomed to squadron navigation, did not maintain their posts. Four ships, which were sailing very badly, remained behind. These vessels were the Spanish three-deckers *Real Carlos* and *San Hermenegilde* and the French vessels *Saint Antoine* and *Formidable*. The latter had a makeshift mast. The English division was well aligned; it was watching us, ready to take advantage of our mistakes. Towards midnight, the *Superb*, detached ahead by Admiral Saumarez, spotted a vessel at which it fired a few volleys.⁶⁹

This attack, occurring in the middle of the night and in dark weather, produced, on board the *Real-Carlos*, the *San-Hermenegilde* and the *Saint-Antoine*, manned by inexperienced crews, extreme confusion. These three vessels returned fire. The captain of the *Saint-Antoine*, unable to realize what was happening around him, stopped firing. The two three-deckers, taking each other for enemies, engaged in a very lively fight at a short distance. Fire broke out on board the *Real-Carlos*; shortly after this vessel blew up. Debris, falling on the *San-Hermenegilde*, started a violent fire on board this vessel; the *San-Hermenegilde* suffered the same fate as the *Real-Carlos*.

Most of the writers who have related this event have not agreed on the causes of the catastrophe. Some, attributing the destruction of the *Real-Carlos* and the *San-Hermenegilde* to the manoeuvre of Captain Keaths, commanding the ship *Superb*, say that this captain placed himself between the two Spanish three-deckers. After firing on both sides, he forced sail and disappeared. The two three-deckers, when the first moment of confusion, resulting from this unexpected attack, had passed, looked for the aggressor. Each of them believed to recognise him in the ship he had abeam. Commander Troude wrote to Admiral Linois: "In the fight of this night, two of the ships which fired on me burned and blew up in the air, I suspected them to be English ... On my entry into Cadiz, I was assured that they were Spanish. "In the report of Rear Admiral Dumanoir-Lepelley to the Minister of the Navy, we read: "A marine guard, saved from the *Real-Carlos* with forty-five men, informed us that, around midnight, the squadron having been hit by the broadside of the English, the *Real-Carlos* and the *San-Hermenegilde* took each other for enemies."⁷⁰

The English version is as follows. When the captain of the *Superb* received the order from Admiral Saumarez to move forward, he saw, on the port side, a three-decked vessel. He reduced his sail and opened fire on this vessel, at a distance of three to four hundred meters. On the third broadside, the English commander, noticing that a fire had just broken out on board the enemy vessel, stopped firing. Shortly afterwards the two Spanish vessels cannonaded each other.

The *Superb*, seeing the *Saint-Antoine*, which her bad progress held back astern, opened fire on this vessel. About an hour after the beginning of the action, the *Saint-Antoine*, which had suffered heavy losses, lowered its flag. The division leader Ray, Captain of the *Saint-Antoine*, was among the wounded. The *Pompée*, carrying the flag of Admiral Saumarez, the *César*, the *Audacious*, the *Spencer* and the *Venerable* joined the *Superb*. Leaving this vessel with the *Saint-Antoine* with the Portuguese frigate *Carlotta* and two avisos, the English admiral continued to run in a westerly direction, in search of the Franco-Spanish squadron. The latter continued on its route, without appearing to be concerned with the events of the night, which it did not know about, but which were revealed to it by the cannonade and the explosion of the two three-deckers. The *Sabine*, carrying Lieutenant General Moreno and Rear Admiral Linois, preceded the squadron. When the first cannon shots were heard, this frigate had reduced sail. The two admirals could not go to the fire with a frigate; moreover, the signals they made to bring ships to the scene of the combat remained unanswered.⁷¹

The lanterns, hoisted at the top of the masts of the *Sabine*, attracted the attention of the combatants. This frigate received cannonballs which killed one man and wounded five. The *Sabine* made sail and moved away.

The *Formidable* was, at the beginning of the night, near the *Saint-Antoine*, the *Real-Carlos* and the *San-Hermenegilde*. It had two men killed and three wounded. Fearing to fire on friendly ships or to receive their fire, Commander Troude made up all the sail that his makeshift mast allowed him to carry, and he moved away from the ships that he saw in the darkness. When daylight broke, the breeze, which had blown very fresh during the night, died down. At this moment, two ships, the *Venerable* of seventy-four and the frigate the *Thames* were near the *Formidable*. Astern, at a considerable distance, could be seen the *Pompey*, the *Caesar*, the *Spencer*, and the *Audacious*. The combined squadron was in sight to the west of Cadiz. The *Venerable* covered herself with sails; although the breeze was light, she quickly reached the French vessel. At five o'clock in the morning, the *Formidable* fired the first shots with her retreating guns. Shortly afterwards, the *Venerable* having arrived abeam of her adversary, a very lively fight, within pistol range, ensued between the two ships. About seven o'clock, the *Venerable*, razed of all her masts, sinking low, ceased her fire; At eight o'clock, she ran aground on the rocks of San Pedro, about twelve miles south of Cadiz. Her position seemed hopeless. Admiral Saumarez was on the point of giving the order to set her on fire; if the combined squadron had shown any intention of closing in, he would have taken that measure immediately. The allies having made no movement, the English worked to refloat the stranded vessel.⁷²

This operation having been crowned with success, the *Venerable* was taken in tow by the frigate the *Tamise*. The losses of the English ship amounted to eighteen killed and eighty-seven wounded. Commander Troude said, in his report, that his ship had twenty killed or seriously wounded, without indicating the number of men hit by enemy fire. The *Formidable* entered Cadiz, on the morning of July 13, to the applause of an enthusiastic crowd who had followed from afar the various twists and turns of this brilliant affair. It was joined, a few hours later, by the Franco-Spanish squadron.

Since the day of July 5, the enemy had weakened and our forces had increased. Admiral Saumarez had only five ships, one of eighty and four of seventy-four, while the Franco-Spanish squadron was composed of nine ships, two of which were three-deckers. However, the crossing from Algeciras to Cadiz, made in the presence of the enemy, had cost the allies two three-deckers and one seventy-four. It seems at first difficult to understand how such a failure could have been inflicted on us. But, after a careful examination of the question, one ceases to be surprised that the squadron, which came from Cadiz to accompany the ships which had fought at Algeciras, should have acquitted itself so badly of its mission. Nations which want to have a navy without sailors must expect similar results. People forgot, in Paris and Madrid, that professional knowledge is necessary to go to sea. From Algeciras to Cadiz, the Franco-Spanish squadron could have had the opportunity to fight, but it had to sail first; it did not know how to fulfill this part of its mission.⁷³

The breeze having freshened and the weather having become dark, it dispersed. The *Saint-Antoine*, which had fought the *Superb*, was making its first sortie; this vessel had been armed in Cadiz, under the direction of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. When we remember the weakness of the personnel on board the ships that left our ports, we easily realize the value that the crews of the ships armed in Spain could have. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir received from France a small number of petty officers and sailors, infantry soldiers and gunners. He supplemented the workforce by hiring foreign sailors, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, attracted by the lure of high pay. Under these conditions, the fight between the *Saint-Antoine* and the *Superb*, a vessel whose armament dated back several years, was not equal. The advantage gained by the English vessel had cost it, it will be hard to believe, only one officer and fourteen sailors or soldiers wounded. During the fight between the *Saint-Antoine* and the *Superb*, the bulk of the squadron continued to run along the course indicated, on the 12th, before nightfall. The French and Spanish vessels would doubtless have been very happy to come to the aid of the *Saint-Antoine*, but it must be assumed that neither of them wanted to run the risk of finding itself alone in the midst of the English squadron. Consequently, each captain waited for daylight to make a decision.

The Spanish navy, formerly flourishing, was suffering the consequences of the disorder which then existed in the finances of this monarchy. The arsenals had no more supplies; the ships, which were no longer being repaired, were rotting in the ports.⁷⁴

The crews, completely neglected and rarely paid, had long been unable to support the old honor of the flag of Castile. On the ships of Admiral Moreno, were found the personnel who armed the fleet of Jose de Cordova, at the battle of Cape Saint-Vincent. The following two facts give a very clear idea of the situation of the two squadrons from a maritime and military point of view. When Admiral Saumarez detached the *Superb* to attack the tail ships of the combined squadron, it was by voice that he gave his orders to the captain of this vessel. The *Superb* was the rear sailor of the *Pompey*. While things were going on with this simplicity among the English, Admirals Moreno and Linois, searching in vain for their squadron, were wondering what the ships could be that they had seen from time to time through the darkness of the night. The *Formidable*, the *Desaix* and the *Indomptable* were part of Admiral Ganteaume's squadron, which had left Brest on 23 January. Many changes had taken place since that time in the crews of these ships. During the two stops at Toulon, on 19 February and 5 April, a large number of men, affected by the epidemic that had started shortly after leaving Brest, had been disembarked. Before parting with Admiral Ganteaume, on the coast of the island of Elba, the *Formidable*, the *Indomptable* and the *Desaix* had given some of their sailors to replace the sick on the ships that were continuing their route to Egypt. When Admiral Linois received the order to go to Cadiz, it was necessary, in order to complete his crews, to take men from the ships that were in the harbor of Toulon.⁷⁵

The *Formidable*, the *Indomptable* and the *Desaix* had therefore gone through very difficult phases. However, these three vessels could be considered among the happiest in our navy. Some men had been trained by these six months of navigation.

Admiral Linois, perhaps exaggerating the significance of the victory at Algeciras, wrote to the minister: "One may be surprised by the remarkable success we obtained at Algeciras, and that my division completely defeated the enemy who was much superior in strength. The advantage we have just won, citizen minister, is due to the bravery of the sailors and the precision of their maneuvers. For six months, since our departure from Brest, we have been almost always at sea, being chased, or chasing the enemy, consequently with the fire-starter in hand. The continual cannon drill and the mock boarding have so accustomed our brave men to all the circumstances of a battle, that when they are there, it seems to them that they are in exercise. If these crews are disorganized, with whom I would undertake the impossible, they will lose that military spirit which made them conquer, and we will no longer have to expect the same successes." A sabre of honor was awarded to Rear-Admiral Linois. The government wanted, it was stated in a decree of July 28, 1801, to reward an act of war as honorable for the arms of the Republic as for the general officer to whom the command was entrusted. Frigate captains Troude and Touffet were promoted to the rank of ship captain. Four honour grenades for the gunners, two rifles for the soldiers who were passengers or belonging to the garrison, six boarding axes for the sailors were granted by the Consuls to each of the ships in Admiral Linois's squadron.⁷⁶

The captain of the corvette *Bull Dog*, not knowing that the French were masters of Ancona, anchored, on February 27, at half a cannon range of the forts. At the first shots fired from land, he had his flag lowered. On May 16, the *Bull Dog*, then commanded by Frigate Captain Girardias, was at Livorno. English boats, entering the port around midnight, captured it. It was calm; the *Bull Dog* was slowly moving away in tow of the enemy boats. Captain Girardias, absent from his ship at the time of the event we have just reported, threw himself into a swing and set off in pursuit of his ship. He was joined by boats carrying sailors and soldiers. The English set fire to the *Bull Dog* and hastily abandoned it. Captain Girardias took back possession of his ship, put out the fire and returned to Leghorn. The same year, the *Bull Dog*, pursued by several English ships, manoeuvred to approach a battery, under the protection of which Captain Girardias intended to place himself. As soon as one of the enemy ships had fired cannonballs, part of the crew threw themselves into the sea and swam towards the coast. The sailors who remained on board, after firing a few cannon shots, hid in the hold. The Captain of the *Bull Dog*, thus abandoned, was obliged to surrender. "Confusion and disorder," wrote Captain Girardias, "were at their height among the crew. I ordered the officers to saber those who did not obey or who left their posts. Several sailors threw themselves into the sea, through the gun ports, and others rushed into the hold despite the sentries."⁷⁷

Foreigners, recruited in Italian ports, formed the majority of the crew. We constantly lost sight of the conditions that warships must meet to play, in the event of an encounter with the enemy, an honorable role. We remember the corvette *Sans-Pareille*, forced to lower its flag, without having been able to defend it, because the crew, suffering from seasickness, was unable to render any service. On August 3, the *Carrère* of fourty was heading towards the island of Elba with a convoy when it was sighted by the English frigates *Pomone*, *Phoenix* and *Perle*. The French frigate, promptly surrounded, lowered its colors; the convoy it was escorting was able to enter Longone. The *Carrère* formed, with the frigates *Succès* and *Bravoure*, a division charged with supporting the operations of the French troops who were laying siege to Porto-Ferrajo. *Bravoure* and *Succès* left on 31 August for Livorno where they were to take on ammunition, but were driven off on 1 September by superior forces. Pressing too closely to land, the two frigates ran aground and fell into enemy hands; only one, *Succès*, could be raised.

The Rochefort squadron did not leave the island of Aix; Admiral Bruix, who had fallen ill, was replaced in his command on 11 June 1801 by Rear-Admiral Decrès. Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse remained in the harbor of Brest with his squadron.⁷⁸

IV

The Consuls had taken, on March 3, 1801, an order relating to the creation of a flotilla of flatboats, comprising thirty-six gunboats and two hundred and sixteen gunboats. Large boats, called barges, and bombards were attached to the flotilla. The gunboats carried three twenty-four-pounder cannons, and the gunboats one twenty-four or eighteen-pounder cannon and one eight-pounder cannon. The crew of the gunboats was twenty petty officers or sailors and forty-five soldiers; on the gunboats, there were nine sailors and eighteen soldiers. The barges were large boats, some a little over twenty-two meters long, and the others about seventeen meters. The first had eighteen oars and the second fourteen. They were armed with four swivel guns. A certain number of boats, belonging to the categories designated in the decree of the Consuls, existed in our ports. The construction of boats of different shapes needed to complete the flotilla began immediately in shipyards established from Flushing to Lorient. It was at Boulogne that it was to assemble. The thirty-six gun ships and the two hundred and sixteen gunboats formed twelve divisions. Each of these divisions, itself divided into three sections, included three gun ship and eighteen gunboats.⁷⁹

The divisions were commanded by frigate captains, the gunboats by ensigns, the gunboats and barges by petty officers. The concentration, at Boulogne, of the various vessels of the flotilla was a difficult operation to carry out. The English had cruising on our coasts, in addition to ships and frigates, ships with a small draft, which could approach land without running the risk of running aground. Few gun ships or gunboats arrived at Boulogne without a fight. The government called Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville to the command in chief of the Boulogne flotilla. A camp was established near the port where a certain number of gunboats, gunships, barges and bombards were already assembled.

Public opinion in England, which had hitherto remained indifferent to the creation of the flotilla, exaggerated the importance of these preparations. Great agitation reigned in people's minds; it seemed that a French army, headed by General Bonaparte, was on the eve of setting foot on the soil of Great Britain. The government did not experience the same alarms; nevertheless, allowing itself to be carried away by the general movement, it called for volunteers, assembled troops and fortified the coast. Knowing the confidence that the name of Nelson inspired in the nation, the ministry gave this admiral the command in chief of the forces intended for the defence of the coasts from Orfordness to Beachy Head. On July 30, Lord Nelson embarked on board the frigate Medusa which was at anchor in the Dunes harbor. On August 3, he arrived off Boulogne with thirty ships of all ranks, among which were several bombards.⁸⁰

Our ships were anchored outside the jetties, forming a very tight line, the ends of which were protected by batteries established on land; they were embossed, presenting the beam to the open sea. On August 4, at five o'clock in the morning, the English bombards opened fire on the flotilla. Admiral Nelson set sail with all his ships to take part in the action; thwarted by the currents, he was obliged to anchor three thousand six hundred meters from our advance guard. In this situation, the enemy ships exchanged a cannonade with ours which could not bring any result. The bombards withdrew at nine o'clock in the evening. Not a man on the flotilla was hit by the enemy's fire; three boats, sunk during the action, resumed their posts a few days later. Among our adversaries, an officer and two sailors received slight wounds. Nelson returned to the Dunes roadstead. This affair was a failure for the English; they had proposed, by attacking our ships, to force them to return to the port. This first success obtained, they hoped that a second bombardment, directed at a restricted area, would result in the destruction of the flotilla. Of these two predictions, neither had come true.

Public opinion, on the other side of the strait, was dissatisfied with the results of the day of August 3. The government, wishing to calm tempers, decided to direct a new attack against the flotilla. On August 15, the English returned to Boulogne; any idea of bombardment was provisionally abandoned. Admiral Nelson, who had brought a large number of boats, divided them into four divisions, the command of which he entrusted to the Captains of the ships Somerville, Parker, Coatgrave and Jones.⁸¹

The first was to fight our right wing, the second and third the center, and the fourth the left wing. The English boats, manned by an elite personnel, taken from among the sailors and marines, had the order to take the ships of the flotilla by boarding. Boats, designated in advance, in each group, were responsible for dragging the attacked ships out to sea. The English boats were equipped with the necessary materials to set fire to the gun ships or gunboats that they could not take. Since the day of August 3, a certain number of ships belonging to the flotilla had entered Boulogne. Admiral Latouche-Tréville had been able to complete the arrangements made for the defence of the roadstead; at each end of the line of embossing, as it existed, on August 3, he had formed a new line perpendicular to the first. In this situation the flotilla faced the attackers on all sides; a light division, placed in front of our line, watched the enemy. On the 15th, in the evening, the English boats came to line up near the *Medusa*, on which Lord Nelson had his flag. At half past eleven, the signal, giving the order to depart, appeared on board the Admiral's frigate. The first division, commanded by Captain Somerville, on arriving near land, was carried by the current to the east of Boulogne; it did not reach the flotilla until very late in the night. Captain Somerville resolutely attacked the vessels near which he found himself.⁸²

Shortly after, day having broken, he moved away; his division counted eighteen men killed and fifty-five wounded. The second division was more fortunate than the first; it arrived, at half past midnight, near the embossing line. Captain Parker made two detachments of his boats. With the first, he headed for the gunboat *Etna*, carrying the command guidon of Captain Pévrieu; the second, under the orders of the first lieutenant of the *Medusa*, steered the gunboat *Volcan*. The English displayed remarkable bravery; but, repulsed with serious losses, they withdrew to avoid complete destruction. The detachment, which had attacked the *Volcan*, had seized a barge. The second division had twenty-one men killed and forty-two wounded. Four bombards, under Captain John Conn, sent to support Captain Parker, followed him in his retreat. The third division, under Captain Coatgrave, had five men killed and twenty-nine wounded. Finally, the fourth division, carried away by the currents, could not reach the flotilla; at daybreak, it rallied its squadron without having fought. The total losses suffered by the English were forty-four killed and one hundred and twenty-six wounded; Captain Parker, who was among the latter, died of his wounds. Four boats remained in our hands; eight had been sunk during the action. Of the flotilla, there were eight killed and forty-one wounded; one officer, eight sailors and eight men were taken prisoner on the barge captured by the enemy. The English had been mistaken about the military value of the flotilla; the attack, directed on the night of August 15 against the various vessels anchored off Boulogne, had no chance of success.⁸³

Admiral Nelson, showing more audacity than skill, had needlessly sacrificed the lives of the men he commanded. This was how public opinion in England judged this enterprise. The consular government awarded four honor grenades, six rifles and twelve axes to the personnel of the flotilla that had taken part in the engagements of August 3 and 15.

The army of Egypt, attacked by superior forces, poorly led by the successor of General Kleber, was forced to capitulate. On June 27, General Belliard, who occupied Cairo, signed, with General Mutchinson, an agreement by virtue of which the troops placed under his command were to evacuate Egypt. The English undertook to transport our soldiers to France. General Menou, shut up in Alexandria, defended himself with great vigor, but the lack of provisions did not allow him to prolong his resistance. On September 5, he negotiated with the enemy on the same terms as General Belliard. The ships, which were in the port of Alexandria, remained in the hands of the Anglo-Turks. The English gave their allies the Venetian ship *Causse*, the corvette *Héliopolis* and some small ships; they kept the frigates *Egyptienne*, *Régénérée* and *Justice*. For some time already, Lord Hawkesbury, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of His Britannic Majesty, and Mr. Otto, Commissioner charged with the exchange of French prisoners in England, had, by order of their governments, begun negotiations for the conclusion of peace.⁸⁴

On October 1, 1801, these two plenipotentiaries signed the preliminary articles of the treaty which was to put an end to the war existing since 1793 between the French Republic and Great Britain. The ratifications were exchanged on October 10. The two governments immediately sent ships to all points of the globe to stop hostilities. In order to prevent any dispute over the prizes which might be taken at sea after the signing of the preliminaries, it had been agreed that the ships captured in the Channel and in the northern seas, twelve days after the exchange of ratifications, would be returned to both sides. This term had been extended to one month for the areas extending from the Channel and the northern seas to the Canary Islands, including the Mediterranean. It was two months from the Canary Islands to the equator, and five months in all other parts of the world, without any exception or more particular distinction of time and place. In execution of the preliminaries, negotiations were opened at Amiens, for the conclusion of the general peace. The French Republic was represented at these conferences by Joseph Bonaparte, Great Britain by the Marquis of Cornwallis, Spain by Don Joseph Nicolas d'Azara and Holland by its ambassador in Paris, Roger Shimmelpenninck.

The definitive treaty of peace between the French Republic, the King of Spain and the Indies and the Batavian Republic, on the one hand, and the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the other hand, was signed on March 27, 1802. The exchange of ratifications took place a few days later. England returned to France and its allies all the colonies it had seized during the course of the war.⁸⁵

However, it retained the Spanish island of Trinidad and the establishments that the Batavian Republic possessed on the island of Ceylon. The Cape of Good Hope remained, in full sovereignty, to Holland, but it was agreed that the vessels, flying the flag of the contracting parties, would enter this port freely, where they would be allowed to take on the supplies they might need. Holland undertook not to demand from them any other duties than those paid by its own vessels. French Guiana was increased by a portion of territory taken from Portuguese Guiana. Such were, from a colonial point of view, the conditions of the Peace of Amiens. It was further agreed that the territories, possessions and rights of the Sublime Porte would be maintained in their integrity, as they were before the war. It was not known, at the time of the signing of the preliminaries, that the army of Egypt was returning to France following a capitulation. The Republic of the Seven Islands was recognized. The islands of Malta and Gose were returned to the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, the independence of which was placed under the guarantee of France, Great Britain, Austria, Spain, Russia and Prussia. The neutrality of the island of Malta with its dependencies was proclaimed. France undertook to withdraw its troops from the Kingdom of Naples and the Roman State. On the other hand, England was to evacuate Porto-Ferraio as well as the ports and islands that it occupied in the Mediterranean or the Adriatic. The arrangements which had been made by the courts of Madrid and Lisbon, at the conclusion of the Treaty of Badajoz, for the rectification of their frontiers, were maintained.⁸⁶

BOOK III

Expedition of Saint-Domingue. Rapid progress made by our troops. Arrest of Toussaint-Louverture. Fatigue and illness destroy our army. - The island of Guadeloupe returns to duty. Breach of the Peace of Amiens. - Ships captured by the English. - Combat of the *Poursuivante* and the *Hercule*. We lose Tabago, Saint Lucia and the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. - *Pondicherry* remains in the hands of the English. - General Rochambeau, who replaced General Leclerc in the command of the army of Saint-Domingue, is forced to capitulate. Planned landing in England. Construction of boats specially assigned to the execution of this enterprise. Work done in the ports called to receive ships of the flotilla. Sums offered to the government for the construction of buildings of all ranks or the purchase of naval materials. Measures taken by England to repel the invasion. - Commitments of the Saint-Houen and Pévrieu divisions. Arrangements made to ensure the prompt embarkation of the troops. Losses suffered by the English cruise. Combats delivered by the divisions of the flotilla rallying Boulogne. Combination imagined by the emperor to bring a French squadron into the Channel. Disaster caused by a gale on the harbor of Boulogne. The English bombard Le Havre. - Inauguration of the Antwerp arsenal and the Cherbourg dike. - New engagements of ships of the flotilla with the English cruise. Latouche-Tréville in Toulon, his activity, his energy, his death. Admiral Villeneuve is called to replace him. Role to be played by the squadrons of Toulon, Rochefort and Brest. - The English attempt to set fire to the ships of the flotilla anchored in front of Boulogne. Attack on Fort Rouge in front of Calais.

I

Immediately after the signing of the preliminaries of peace, which had taken place in London on October 10, 1801, as we have seen above, the government took care of colonial affairs.⁸⁷

The First Consul first turned his attention to Saint-Domingue. This island, which had been, for a long time, one of the elements of the prosperity of France, had withdrawn, since the Revolution, from our authority. The metropolis was represented by an agent, but this one had only a purely nominal power. The black general Toussaint-Louverture was the real master of the colony. His army, which numbered no less than twenty thousand men, was well organized; it had an abundance of arms, food and munitions. Considerable forces were necessary to bring the island back to obedience. Troops and ships were assembled in our ports, at Flushing and Cadiz. The expeditionary force included thirty-five thousand men, composed of the best soldiers of the armies of the Rhine and Italy. It had at its head the division Generals Rochambeau, Dugua, Debelle, Hardy, Boudet; General Leclerc, brother-in-law of the First Consul, commanded in chief the land and sea forces. Vice-Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse received command of the fleet; this admiral left Brest on December 14, 1801, with ten French vessels, five Spanish vessels and nine frigates. General Leclerc was on board the *Ocean*, which Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse was sailing. The Brest squadron, joined under Belle-Isle by a division coming from Lorient, set sail for the bay of Samana, the rendezvous assigned to the ships of the expedition. She anchored there on January 29, 1802. Admiral Villaret was joined shortly after by Admiral Latouche-Tréville who had left Rochefort with six ships. Two thousand men, under the command of General Kerverseau, were sent to Santo Domingo, capital of the Spanish part.⁸⁸

Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville left for Port-au-Prince with Boudet's division. Rear-Admiral Magon was to seize Fort-Dauphin.

Admiral Villaret, having the greater part of the troops on board his ships, headed for Cap Français; he presented himself, on February 3, in front of this city. The dispositions taken by the Blacks indicated the determination to resist us. The beacons had been removed; the forts were occupied and armed. A frigate was detached ahead to communicate with the land. General Christophe declared that he could not, in the absence of Toussaint-Louverture, allow our ships to enter the harbor; he was waiting, he said, for orders from the generalissimo to whom he had sent a courier. General Christophe added that any attempt to force the passes would be followed by the burning of the Cape and the massacre of the white population. The troops were landed the next day; on the 5th, they marched on the city while the squadron cannonaded the forts. On the 6th, Admiral Villaret entered the harbor; the Blacks had moved away, but before leaving the city they had delivered it to the flames. Some of the whites had fallen under the blows of the Blacks, others had been forced to follow Christophe's troops. The same events occurred wherever our soldiers appeared; the Blacks fled, leaving behind them the carnage and the fire. The divisions of Admirals Ganteaume, Linois, Hartzinch, who had left Toulon, Cadiz and Flushing, arrived at Cap Français. Before the end of February, we were masters of the greater part of the island. Toussaint-Louverture had withdrawn to the hills with a few soldiers.⁸⁹

General Leclerc, taking advantage of the favorable season, vigorously pushed military operations. The last points occupied by the Blacks, in the interior of the island, fell into our hands. Abandoned by most of his own, Toussaint-Louverture submitted.

At the time when it was permissible to believe that the colony was reaching the end of its troubles, General Leclerc learned that a new uprising was being prepared. The fighting and especially the fatigue of the campaign had considerably reduced the expeditionary force. Toussaint-Louverture, who was closely following the gradual weakening of our army, was only waiting for a favorable opportunity to take up arms again. Letters revealing his plans having been seized, he was arrested and sent to France (1). Soon our troops had to fight an enemy more dangerous than the Blacks; yellow fever broke out and wreaked the greatest havoc in our ranks. General Leclerc, struck down by the scourge, died on November 1, 1802; General Rochambeau succeeded him. The situation became very critical. There were seven thousand five hundred sick people in the hospitals; twenty-five thousand men had succumbed. Only two thousand two hundred men remained able to bear arms. The insurrection which threatened us broke out; its progress was rapid. In October 1802, Cap Français, where we had taken refuge, was tightly blockaded by the Blacks. New troops arrived in the colony; General Rochambeau, displaying the greatest energy, reconquered part of the lost ground. Guadeloupe, following the example of Saint-Domingue, had revolted.

1. We know that he was imprisoned in the fort of Joux where he died shortly after his arrival in France.⁹⁰

Two ships and four frigates, under the command of Admiral Bouvet, anchored, in the month of May 1802, on the roadstead of Basse Terre. This division carried four thousand men. General Richepanse, placed at the head of this expedition, brought the island of Guadeloupe back into line.

At the beginning of the year 1803, it was not supposed that the treaty of Amiens would last long. The war party, in England, was regaining influence every day. It was supported by high trade which did not find, in peace, the advantages on which it counted. England still occupied Malta. The Addington ministry, weak, irresolute, did not dare to meet our demands by evacuating this island. Although the English people were opposed to the resumption of hostilities, it was easy to foresee that this situation would lead the two peoples to a new war. Vice-Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse was recalled on April 20, 1803. He set sail for our ports, leaving Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville on the coast of Saint-Domingue with four ships and nine frigates. This admiral, who fell ill shortly after Villaret's departure, returned to France. Command of the station passed into the hands of Captain Barré de la Surveillante. The Court of Madrid had given us Louisiana in exchange for the Kingdom of Etruria*. The troops, who were to occupy this new possession, were ready to leave on a squadron assembled in the port of Helvoëtsluis. The order was given to disembark them. Louisiana, which was extremely large, was difficult to keep in a war with Great Britain. The First Consul decided to cede it to the United States.⁹¹

*Tuscany in Italy

His government began negotiations with the representatives of this power which were promptly concluded. America acquired Louisiana at the price of eighty million. Of this sum, twenty million were intended to compensate American trade for the losses that our privateers had caused it. Troops were sent to Guadeloupe, Martinique and Cayenne. Ships returning to France were ordered to land, in these colonies, arms, munitions and part of their artillery.

The English ambassador left Paris on May 13, 1803; at the same time, General Andreossi, our representative in London, took the road to Dover. Although war had not been declared, the cabinet of Saint James placed an embargo on French and Dutch ships in the ports of Great Britain. As a reprisal for a measure so contrary to the law of nations, the First Consul arrested the English who were on the territory of the Republic. A squadron, placed under the command of Lord Cornwallis, was established off Brest, detaching numerous cruisers to our ocean coasts. On May 18, the forty-four-gun frigate *Doris* chased the fourteen-gun lugger *Affronteur*, commanded by Lieutenant Duthoya, near Ouessant. Arriving within cannon range, the frigate fired cannonballs at the lugger, which immediately retaliated. *Doris* joined *Affronteur* side by side; the disabled lugger, with her captain and eleven men killed and fourteen wounded, lowered her flag. The declaration of war by England on France was dated May 16; it was inserted, on the 17th, in the London Gazette and communicated, on the 18th, to the Chambers. The dispatches, addressed to the officers commanding the naval forces of Great Britain on all the seas to announce to them the breach of the peace of Amiens, bore the date of the 16th.⁹²

Thus, the order to begin hostilities had been sent before the English people even knew that they were at war with us. Several ships that had left the Antilles fell into the hands of the enemy as they approached our coasts. Such was the fate of the frigates *Franchise* and *Embuscade*, the corvettes *Colombe* and *Bacchante*, and the brigs *Impatient* and *Dard*. These ships had not been informed of the declaration of war; they were returning after leaving part of their artillery in Saint-Domingue, Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The English had considerable forces in the Antilles Sea; Warned on June 16th of the resumption of hostilities, they went to all the points that we occupied. The ship *Duquesne*, the frigate *Créole*, the corvette *Mignonne*, the brigs *Lodi*, *Aiguille* and *Vigilant* were captured. On June 28th, at daybreak, three ships chased the *Poursuivante* of forty-four, commanded by division chief Willaumez. The French frigate, coming from Les Cayes, was heading for Cap Français in Saint-Domingue. The ship *Hercule*, of eighty, took the lead of the enemy ships; at eight o'clock in the morning, it engaged in combat with the *Poursuivante*. The breeze, which was very light, made any maneuver difficult; nevertheless, commander Willaumez managed to pass to the stern of the *Hercule*. The ship received, in this position, a broadside which caused it serious damage. The English captain, fearing to run aground, headed out to sea; the French frigate, disabled, entered the Saint-Nicolas mole.⁹³

General Lapoype, who commanded at this point, accompanied by a large number of officers, came on board the *Poursuivante* to compliment the commander, the staff and the crew. Artillery salvos were fired by the forts in honor of the frigate. The latter had ten killed and fifteen wounded; the midshipman Violette was among the former and the lieutenant of the ship Esmangard was among the latter. The *Hercule* had forty men out of action; its captain had been killed. The English seized Saint Lucia on June 22 and Tobago on July 1; on August 20, they occupied the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon.

In March 1803, a division, composed of the ship *Marengo*, the frigates *Belle-Poule*, *Atalante* and *Sémillante* and two transports, under the command of Rear-Admiral Durand-Linois, had set sail for Pondicherry. General Decaen, appointed to the command-in-chief of the French establishments located to the east of the Cape of Good Hope, was on board the *Marengo*. Rear-Admiral Linois, arriving on 14 July 1803 in front of Pondicherry, informed the English authorities that he had been given the mission to occupy the town. They replied that they had received no instructions in this regard from their government. The same day, three ships, two of seventy-four and one of sixty, under the command of Admiral Rainier, anchored in the harbour. The next day, July 12, the brig, the *Bélier*, joined the French division; it brought Admiral Linois the order to proceed without delay to the Isle de France with all his ships. The admiral set sail during the night.⁹⁴

The situation of the French troops in Saint-Domingue, having improved for a moment, became very critical again. The climate devoured the reinforcements sent to General Rochambeau; the breach of the Peace of Amiens precipitated events. The English supported the operations of the insurgents and their navy prevented all communication by sea between the different points of the island that we occupied. General Rochambeau, forced to fall back, took refuge at Cap Français; he was soon able to convince himself that he would not be safe there for long. The evacuation was decided. Unfortunately, the English, aware of our position, tightly blockaded the Cape. Negotiations were opened with Commodore Loring who was leading the English cruise; we offered to leave the city, on condition that we were free to return to France on the ships that were in the harbor. The commodore rejected this proposal. It was necessary to give in to bad luck and surrender to the English so as not to fall into the hands of the Blacks. The navy lost the frigates *Clorinde*, *Vertu*, *Surveillante*, the corvette *Sagesse*, the brigs *Vautour*, *Papillon*, *Alerte*, *Cerf*, some transports and merchant ships. These events took place at the end of November 1803.

The English tried, without success, to seize the Spanish part of the island of Santo Domingo. General Ferrand was able to remain in the country with the help of the inhabitants.⁹⁵

II

The French navy, after the disasters it had suffered, being powerless to exercise, at sea, a serious action, we could only reach England by carrying the war on its soil. The project of descent, alternately pursued and abandoned by the Directory, the First Consul resolved to put it into execution. He wanted to be able to cross the strait with one hundred and fifty thousand men, ten thousand horses and four hundred guns. The creation of a flotilla, specially intended for the transport of the expeditionary army, was decided. The department of the navy, after a careful examination of the question, proposed the construction of flat boats of different dimensions. The draft of the largest did not exceed two meters fifty. All could run aground without causing damage. These two conditions were necessary both to approach enemy shores and to enter our ports. The new boats were sailed and rowed; they carried large cannon, which allowed them to defend themselves against large vessels. As soon as the projects presented by the navy had received the approval of the First Consul, work began. Shipyards were established not only in the ports but on the banks of the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, the Gironde, the Somme, the Oise, the Meuse and the Escaut.⁹⁶

The flotilla was to include, in addition to the transport vessels, prams, gun ships, gunboats, barges and caiques.

The prams were thirty-five meters long and eight meters thirty centimeters wide; their draft was two meters fifty. Masted and sailed like corvettes, they had a crew of seventy-two men. The prams could embark sixty horses with their riders or two hundred infantrymen; their armament included twelve twenty-four-barrel cannons. The gunboats were twenty-four meters, seventy-two centimeters long, five meters fifty wide and had a draft of one meter ninety-five. Their armament consisted of two twenty-four-pounders at the front, one twenty-four-pounder at the rear, and two thirty-six-pounder carronades. They were rigged as brigs; their crew consisted of twenty-four men. The second-class longboats, also called gunboats, had a twenty-four-pounder cannon at the front and an eight-pounder field piece at the rear. They carried an artillery caisson on their deck and two horses in a stable set up in the center of the vessel. Gear, always in place, allowed the horses, the caisson and the eight-pounder to be quickly embarked or disembarked. These boats, which were lugger-masted, were nineteen meters forty-four centimeters long, one meter fifty-six wide and one meter thirty in draft. They were manned by ten sailors. The prams were commanded by ship lieutenants, the gunboats by ensigns and the gunboats by midshipmen or helmsmen.⁹⁷

The barges, nineteen meters forty-four centimeters long, three meters wide, with a draft of one meter thirty-one centimeters, were sailed in lugger. They were commanded by a master, having under his orders a few sailors. The barges had, at the front, a howitzer of sixteen centimeters or a piece of four, and, at the rear, a howitzer of twelve centimeters. Some caiques, large longboats, carrying a cannon of twenty-four, at the rear, were built. They were sailed in lugger and manned by six men. A commission was appointed to search, in the commercial ports, for boats that could be usefully employed in this great enterprise. Those that it judged suitable for this service were purchased by the State. This second flotilla, intended for transport and mainly for the transport of equipment, was composed of coastal vessels or fishing boats with a shallow draft.

Boulogne became the concentration point for the majority of the expedition's vessels. Opposite this port, on the other side of the strait, at a distance of twelve leagues, are the lowlands located between the cliffs of Dover and the point of Hastings. This part of the coastline presents favorable conditions for a landing. The right wing of the invasion army was to meet at Wimereux and Ambleteuse, and the left wing at Etaples. Wimereux is one league north of Boulogne, at the mouth of the Wimille stream. To the north of Wimereux, at a distance of one league, is Ambleteuse; Etaples is five leagues southwest of Boulogne, at the mouth of the Canche.⁹⁸

There was much to be done to make these ports, and especially that of Boulogne, suitable for their new purpose. The work, undertaken immediately, was pushed forward with activity. As it was known that the English navy would endeavour to destroy the points chosen to shelter the flotilla, the construction of the forts and batteries necessary to repel the enemy's attack was begun. Our coasts and the islands along the coast were put in a state of defence. Vice-Admiral Truguet, with Rear-Admirals Dordelin and Missiessy under his command, was placed at the head of the forces we had at Brest; Rear-Admiral Villeneuve commanded the Rochefort squadron and Vice-Admiral Ganteaume that of Toulon. Command of the flotilla was given to Vice-Admiral Bruix.

France, which had been at war since 1793, ardently desired to enjoy the benefits of peace. She had viewed with the greatest regret the rupture of the Treaty of Amiens; but the bad faith of the English ministry, refusing to return Malta, after having made a formal commitment to do so, had caused extreme irritation in our country and made the new struggle in which we were engaged popular. Thus the project of landing in England was favorably received by public opinion. The department of Loiret was the first to think of coming to the aid of the State; it sent to Paris three hundred thousand francs intended for the construction and armament of a thirty-gun frigate. The departments, towns, communes, and even simple corporations followed this example. The department of Côte-d'Or offered one hundred large-caliber pieces on condition that they would be melted down at Le Creusot. Lot-et-Garonne voted funds that the government was to use to purchase sailcloth in the department.⁹⁹

Paris gave a ship of one hundred and twenty guns, Lyon a ship of one hundred, Bordeaux a ship of eighty, Marseille a ship of seventy-four. Less important cities gave some frigates or corvettes, others flat boats. The Senate donated a ship of one hundred and twenty guns. The receivers general, of large trading houses, paid into the treasury sums representing the price of gunboats or gunboats. The Italian Republic, carried away by the same momentum, undertook to pay the expense relating to the construction of two frigates and twelve gunboats.

III

The English Government, in signing the Treaty of Amiens, had yielded to the pressure of public opinion, but it had considered peace only as a truce during which it had prepared for war. At the beginning of hostilities, our adversaries had sixty ships of the line at sea or ready to sail. When the plans for a landing, formed by the consular government, were known, the Admiralty made arrangements to meet this new danger. A squadron, comprising ships of seventy-four and sixty, frigates, corvettes and a large number of small vessels, was assembled at the Dunes, under the command of Lord Keith.¹⁰⁰

This admiral was to fight, by all means in his power, the ships that France was preparing to land an army in England; he had the guard of the coast between the Thames and the Isle of Wight. Rear-Admiral Louis was detached in front of Boulogne; the ship captains Sydney Smith and Dudley Olivier blockaded the first Ostend and Flushing and the second Le Havre. The English divisions, linking up with each other, exercised a continual surveillance over our movements. Avisos, cruising in the Pas-de-Calais and exchanging signals with the Dunes harbor, kept Lord Keith exactly informed of what was happening on our coasts. These measures, adopted from the beginning of the war, had given public opinion sufficient satisfaction. The English were little disposed to believe that their country could be invaded. They remembered that the great Irish expedition, led by General Hoche in 1796, had failed. The squadron, dispersed by the rough winter weather, had returned to France. Attempts of lesser importance had been made; all had ended to our disadvantage. The Directory had thought of making a landing in England; it had abandoned this project, when the preparations were already well advanced, shrinking before the difficulties which its execution presented. From this set of circumstances, there had resulted, among our adversaries, the conviction that an expedition, whatever it might be, would be destroyed before reaching the shores of Great Britain. This confidence in the inviolability of its territory, the English people were on the point of losing.¹⁰¹

The construction of the flotilla was proceeding rapidly. In our ports, we saw boats of all sizes, ready to go to the points indicated for their concentration. Already, gun ships, gunboats, barges had put to sea. These vessels, despite the English cruises, had arrived at their destination; not only had they sailed well, but they had used their artillery successfully. Finally, it was not unknown, on the other side of the strait, that a large army, camped on our coasts, was destined to embark on the flotilla. Disquiet seized minds; the wooden ramparts, which until then had been the strength and pride of England, no longer seemed sufficient. An army was desired, a result difficult to achieve in a country where conscription did not exist. Nevertheless, the danger seemed so great that the ministry proposed to call up all men from seventeen to fifty-five years of age. This authorization was granted in August 1803, despite the reluctance that parliament felt to take such a measure. The approaches to London were fortified; troops were stationed on the coast, from the Isle of Wight to the mouth of the Thames. Between these two points, the military authority had batteries erected wherever the places seemed to present facilities for a landing. Fires, lit on the heights, were to carry the news of the arrival of the French far away. Wagons were placed in large numbers so that the troops could move quickly. The naval armaments were pushed with new activity; The British Parliament voted the funds necessary for the maintenance of one hundred thousand sailors or marines.¹⁰²

The English people wanted to convince themselves that the Dunes squadron would succeed in destroying the ships on which the French army was to embark. The forces, placed under the command of Admiral Keith, pursued this goal with more ardor than success. During the month of September 1803, the British navy bombarded Granville, Dieppe and Fécamp, ports in which there were ships of the flotilla either afloat or under construction. These various operations did not cause us any damage.

The enlargement of Ambleteuse, Wimereux, Étaples and Boulogne progressed rapidly; shortly after the start of the work, these ports had sufficient water depth to receive ships of all sizes. Quays made the embarkation of personnel and equipment quick and easy. The defense works were not carried out with less activity; Étaples, Ambleteuse, Wimereux offered complete security. Boulogne, a meeting point for a considerable number of vessels, particularly attracted the attention of the enemy. Great difficulties were overcome to put the city and the port out of reach. Two forts were built off the coast, one on the Pointe de la Crèche and the other on the Pointe de l'Heurt. A third, the Fort en Bois, placed between the first two, was raised on piles, driven into the sand at the low-water mark. At the beginning of this enterprise, the English covered our workers with cannonballs. To keep the enemy at a distance, platforms were set up as far as the sea would allow, on which thirty-six-inch guns and twelve-inch mortars were placed.¹⁰³

The artillery set up batteries on all points of the coast with favorable conditions. Five hundred large-caliber pieces and mortars defended the approaches to Boulogne from the sea. A certain number of twenty-four and thirty-six pieces, mounted on marine mounts, could fire at an angle of forty-five degrees. In these conditions, the enemy was kept at a distance and any attempt at bombardment was bound to fail.

On September 27, 1803, the ship captain of Saint-Houen left Dunkirk with thirty gunboats or gun boats, to go to Boulogne. Assuming, according to the enemy's maneuver, that they were concentrating considerable forces at Cape Grinez, he entered Calais. The next day, the English appeared before this port; after having launched a large number of bombs which did us no harm, they withdrew. On the 28th, the commander of Saint-Houen set sail; arriving on the other side of Cape Grinez, he found himself in the presence of about twenty English vessels, frigates, corvettes and brigs. The fight began. After a vigorous cannonade, which lasted several hours, our adversaries put to sea. In the afternoon, the captain of the ship of Saint-Houen anchored, on the roadstead of Boulogne, in the company of Rear-Admiral Magon, who had come to meet him with a division of the flotilla. The captain of the ship Pévrieu had set sail from Dunkirk with twenty-five vessels. Prevented by the calm from rallying, in accordance with the instructions of Admiral Bruix, the ships which had left Calais on the 28th, he passed Cape Grinez on the 29th. His division, attacked, as had been the day before, that of the commander of Saint-Houen, continued its route, now, by a very lively fire, the enemy at a distance.¹⁰⁴

Rear Admiral Magon, rallying Commander Pévrieu, advanced towards the English. After an engagement, which lasted about two hours, the enemy moved away; the admiral returned to Boulogne. A gunboat, hit at the waterline by a cannonball and sinking, threw itself on the coast; it was refloated and brought back to port. In the various affairs that we have just reported, officers, sailors and soldiers had behaved valiantly. The soldiers had maneuvered the oars, under enemy fire, with calm and dexterity. All were full of confidence in the boats they were sailing. Below Cape Grinez, we had had, before us, frigates and corvettes. The depth of the water, in the position skillfully chosen by the English, had allowed the large ships to approach land and consequently to fight at close range. On November 5, 1803, the English cruise, twelve ships strong, vessels, frigates, corvettes and brigs, made a demonstration against the ships of the flotilla, gunboats and gunboats, which formed a line of embossing outside the jetties. We had, in the harbor, about a hundred ships. After a cannonade, vigorously supported on both sides, the enemy withdrew. The First Consul was present at this affair. He made frequent appearances in Boulogne, giving, by his presence, a lively impulse to all the work. He ensured, with meticulous attention, that his orders were executed. Finally, in the company of the heads of land and sea services, the First Consul decided the questions of detail that were raised each day by the preparations for such a large expedition.¹⁰⁵

At Calais, on September 27, during the bombardment of this city, on the 28th and 29th, during the attack, under Cape Grinez, of the Saint-Houen and Pévrieu divisions, the army artillery had lent the navy the most useful assistance. The batteries, intended for the defense of the flotilla, followed, along the shore, the movements of our ships. If these were attacked, they took up position on the seashore and opened fire on the English. Their fire was all the more effective because they had not only field pieces to fire on the boats, but also twenty-four light pieces and six-inch howitzers, installed, for this special service, on rolling carriages. Columns of cavalry were carrying out a continuous surveillance service on the coast. Some of the flotilla's boats, too closely followed by superior forces, or having suffered serious damage as a result of a fight, ran aground; artillerymen and horsemen defended them against the English boats.

The success of the Saint-Houen and Pévrieu divisions gave new impetus to the concentration of the flotilla. A very fortunate measure had been taken to reduce the difficulties of this operation; the coastline, from Brest to Texel, had been divided into a certain number of districts. Each of them was commanded by a senior naval officer; he directed the movements of the flotilla's vessels on the march in the district placed under his orders. We thus had officers who were familiar with the waters in which they were called upon to navigate, and who were able to do what others, even more daring, would not have dared to undertake.¹⁰⁶

IV

The gunships represented the main force of the flotilla. Armed with large-caliber cannons, sailing and rowing quite well, they were called upon to play the leading role in an encounter with the enemy, during the crossing of England. The gunboats, less strong, but nevertheless able to defend themselves even against large ships, would, in this hypothesis, have figured in the second line. The barges, mobile, fast, had to be carried on the flanks of the enemy to cannonade or board them. They were also responsible for towing, out of the fire, ships temporarily reduced to impotence. In all the convoys headed for Boulogne, there were a certain number of gunships and gunboats placed in the same conditions as if the flotilla had set sail for the coast of England. The personnel, the equipment, and even the horses, were on board these vessels.

The gunships and gunboats carried an infantry company. The regiments had, at that time, three battalions, two of war and one of depot. Each battalion was composed of nine companies. Consequently, nine gunships or gunboats took a battalion and eighteen a regiment. For the navy, these nine gunships or gunboats formed a section, and eighteen a division.¹⁰⁷

The section, for barges that only took half a company, included eighteen boats of this type, and the division thirty-six. Thus, a gunship or a gunboat, carrying a company, a section carrying a battalion, and a division a regiment, two divisions of the flotilla embarked a brigade, and four a division. One or more divisions of barges were added, when the division of the army included, in addition to the four line regiments, a regiment of light infantry. Four divisions of the flotilla, that is to say the vessels necessary to carry a division of the army, formed a squadron. Two, three or four squadrons were assigned to transport an army corps, depending on whether it was composed of two, three or four divisions. The squadrons were commanded by rear admirals or ship captains. This system, which was in keeping with our military organization, made the important operation of embarkation easy. Ships were designated for the transport of artillery, cavalry and baggage.

While awaiting the departure of the flotilla for the coast of England, the gunships and gunboats were kept on the prams, the gunships and the gunboats, a quarter of the soldiers that these same ships were to transport. After a stay of one month, this personnel was replaced by a new detachment, comprising the same number of men. The soldiers did not climb the masts, but they took part in all the manoeuvres, did exercises and especially artillery exercises and learned to handle the oars.¹⁰⁸

Familiarized with the service of buildings, accustomed to the sea, they were not to experience any surprise the day when the flotilla, setting sail, would find itself in the presence of enemy ships. A battalion of sailors, seven hundred and thirty-seven men strong, was attached to the consular guard. The staff included a captain of a ship in command, five captains of a frigate or lieutenant of a ship, captains of companies, and twenty-five lieutenants of a ship or ensigns commanding squads. The number of sailors was six hundred and twenty-five. Although this figure was not considerable, the formation of this battalion raised just criticism. Why remove sailors from the navy, when, due to the exhaustion of the maritime registration, we were obliged, every day, to increase the number of men, foreign to the profession of the sea, entering into the composition of the crews?

The vessels which were in the port of Boulogne were divided into two fractions, one called the right wing and the other the left wing of the center of the flotilla. The right wing occupied the right side of the port, facing the sea, and the other wing the opposite side. General Soult's corps was divided into two camps, established one to the right and the other to the left of the Liane. The troops placed in the first, had to embark on the vessels of the right wing, and those which were established in the second on the ships of the left wing. The companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, and divisions of General Soult knew the ships assigned to them. On both sides of the port, starting from the quay, nine gunboats or gun boats, that is to say the number of vessels necessary to embark a battalion, were arranged in a single row.¹⁰⁹

When the head of the troops, entering the port, arrived at the height of the ships closest to the sea, the first company of each battalion, passing over all the boats, arrived at the ninth, the second company at the eighth, the third at the seventh. The other companies proceeding in the same way, the first was on the gunship or the gunboat which was near the quay. The horses, removed by gear specially installed for this purpose, passed successively from one boat to another, and quickly arrived at their destination. Similar arrangements were made in all the ports where the troops of the army of England were to embark. When the weather permitted, divisions of the flotilla formed one or more mooring lines in the Boulogne roadstead. All the ships took part in this service, resulting in continual movements that the sailors and soldiers executed with speed. Sometimes, the divisions of the flotilla were in the same loading conditions as if they had set sail to cross the strait. Arriving in the roadstead, they swept the beach with cannon fire and landed troops, horses, cannons and equipment; these exercises, frequently repeated, gave the personnel great strength. Officers, sailors and soldiers, far from fearing the difficulties of the expedition, impatiently awaited the moment when it would be undertaken.

The English were doing a difficult service in the Channel and the North Sea. They could only watch our ports and prevent the flotilla's ships from meeting by staying close to land.¹¹⁰

Bad weather, fog, continually put their ships in danger. On March 26, the corvette *Determinée* sank after hitting a rock near the island of Jersey. On the night of June 5, the frigate *Seine* was lost on a sandbank near Texel. The crews of the *Determinée* and the *Seine* were picked up by the English cruise. The *Minerve* of forty-eight ran aground, on July 2, near the Cherbourg dike. The gunboats *Chiffonne* and *Terrible*, anchored in this port, immediately went out; taking up position on the front of the enemy frigate, they cannonaded it vigorously. The fort of Pelée Island joined its fire with that of the *Chiffonne* and *Terrible*. At half past five in the morning, the *Minerve* lowered its flag. This frigate, refloated the same day, took, in the French navy, the name of *Canonnière*. On December 10, the frigate *Shannon*, threw itself on the coast under the batteries of Cape Hogue. The crew fell into our hands; as for the frigate, it was set on fire by English boats. On the 30th of the same month, the brig *Grappler* ran aground on Chausey Island. Some fishing boats, carrying sailors and soldiers, under the command of frigate captain Epron, left Granville and headed towards the brig. After a short engagement, the English ship lowered its flag. The *Grappler*, which had been wrecked on the rocks, was given over to the flames.

The Batavian flotilla, which was to go to Ostend, Dunkirk and Calais, was still in the Scheldt at the beginning of the year 1804. The English, finding deep water at this point, kept close to land and hindered the movements of the Dutch.¹¹¹

On March 11, Rear Admiral Verhuell, who was in command of the Batavian flotilla, set sail with a division, without being seen by the English cruise. On the 12th, at daybreak, a few enemy ships having approached, the action began. The fire of the twenty-four-pounders and the howitzers, with which the Dutch ships were armed, forced our adversaries to put to sea. Rear Admiral Verhuell entered Ostend after having fought a new battle. On the 16th of May, taking advantage of a favourable wind, he left Flushing with the prams, the *Ville d'Anvers*, on which his flag was flying, the *Ville d'Aix*, nineteen gunships, forty-nine gunboats and some transports. This division found itself in the presence of the enemy as soon as it had crossed the mouth of the Scheldt. The English cruise, commanded by Sir Sydney Smith, consisted of three frigates, a brig and a cutter. Hearing the cannon, two divisions of barges, under the command of frigate captain Lambour, left Ostend and quickly went to meet the Dutch. The pram the *Ville d'Anvers* ran aground, but, with the support of the land artillery, it victoriously repelled the enemy. After an engagement which had lasted no less than six hours, the English put to sea. The Batavian division reached Ostend; some ships, upset by a change of wind, returned to the Scheldt. The *Ville d'Anvers* ran aground and entered Ostend fighting. A transport boat, carried out to sea by the current, was captured. Other divisions, coming from our ports or from the ports of Holland, arrived at their destination no less fortunately than the ships which left Flushing, on May 6, under the orders of Admiral Verhuell.¹¹²

On May 5, 1804, four gunboats, commanded by Lieutenant Letourneur, were heading towards Lorient when they were sighted by an English corvette which, shortly afterwards, was joined by a lugger. Attacked by these two ships, the gunboats retaliated with such vigor that the enemy fled. Hit off the island of Houat, the corvette and the lugger lowered their flag.

V

During the month of May 1804, the greater part of the flotilla was gathered in the ports designated for the embarkation of the army. In Holland, the armament of a squadron of seven ships was being completed, as well as the transport vessels necessary to carry the fifth corps, that of General Marmont, twenty-four thousand men strong. Vice-Admiral Ganteaume, who had replaced Admiral Truguet in command of the Brest squadron, had eighteen ships under his command. Rear-Admiral Villeneuve was in the harbor of the island of Aix with five ships. Rear-Admiral Bedout, returning from Saint-Domingue at the end of 1803 with five ships, had entered Ferrol; this division was still in this port where it was blockaded by the English.¹¹³

Rear Admiral Bedout, who had fallen ill, had been replaced by his chief of staff, Captain Gourdon, who was promoted shortly after to the rank of Rear Admiral. The Toulon squadron, commanded by Vice Admiral Latouche-Tréville, had eight ships. Finally, in each of our ports, there were ships whose armament was very advanced. The First Consul, whom we will now call the Emperor, since this title had been conferred on him on May 18, 1804, was thinking of attempting to land in England in July or August.

We had neglected nothing to inspire England with the idea that the ships assembled at Ambleteuse, Wimereux, Boulogne and Étaples could, without the assistance of a squadron, achieve the goal that France was pursuing. Sailing and rowing, the flotilla was able to cover the distance that separated us from England. Its armament, composed of large pieces, allowed it to defend itself against the strongest ships. If the number of cannons on each ship was small, the artillery of the flotilla, taken as a whole, had real power. The ships of all sizes, with their shallow draft, entered or left our ports with ease. The embarkation of troops and equipment was done quickly. If a favorable opportunity presented itself, it only took a very short time for the expedition to put to sea. If the flotilla took advantage of calm weather or thick fog, it would pass without encountering the enemy. In this hypothesis, we would approach the English coast with one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty thousand men, four hundred pieces of cannon drawn by two horses, ammunition and provisions for twenty days.¹¹⁴

The ships of the flotilla were thrown into the coast, close to land, since they had a shallow draft. Thanks to their flat shapes, gunships, gunboats, and barges maintained a position that allowed them to land men and equipment promptly. These were the favorable sides of our situation; there were others that we had the duty to consider.

The ships of the flotilla were not all of the same construction. The gunboats were less well sailed and had a shallower draft than the gunships. The action of the winds and currents was exerted in a different way on these two types of ships. During the crossing, however short it was, the wind could rise and the sea become rough; If this hypothesis were realized, would it be possible to maintain order in the flotilla? After the navigation came the combat; the engagements, sustained until then, had taken place close to land. The captains of the ships, having a deep draft, had always been very circumspect in their maneuvers; fearing to run aground, they did not approach the coast. Offshore the ships and frigates resumed their freedom of action. What would be, in these new conditions, the result of an encounter with the English fleet? The calm and the fog seemed to exclude the question of combat; but would these circumstances occur during the time necessary to embark the army, leave the port, make the crossing and land the troops and equipment? These considerations were extremely serious; After having weighed them carefully and taken, on a subject of this importance, the advice of the commander of the flotilla, Vice-Admiral Bruix, and of the Minister of the Navy, Vice-Admiral Decrès, the Emperor arrived at the conclusion that the passage of the flotilla had to be protected by a squadron.¹¹⁵

The execution of this plan presented difficulties which, at first, seemed insurmountable. How, in fact, could a fleet be brought into the Channel, that is to say so close to the shores of England, without the latter being immediately surrounded by superior forces? The Emperor tried to resolve this problem.

The Toulon squadron was to seize the first favorable opportunity to set sail. After having joined the ship *Aigle* in front of Cadiz and having unblocked the five ships of Rear-Admiral Villeneuve, anchored in the roadstead of the island of Aix, Admiral Latouche-Tréville would enter the Channel with sixteen ships. The English had only seven ships in the roadstead of Dunes; if these were joined by the forces cruising in front of the Texel, seven Dutch ships, ready to leave with a convoy of eighty sails, would put to sea. As for the squadron blockading Brest, it would be held in check by Admiral Ganteaume. The execution of this project, which was initially to take place in August, was definitively set for September. The final preparations for the expedition were hastened; in all our maritime arsenals, activity was redoubled to complete the armaments that had been started. Troops were designated to embark on our squadrons. The Emperor ordered Admirals Ganteaume, Villeneuve, Latouche-Tréville to make frequent voyages in order to tire the enemy, by forcing him to keep a continual watch. Left in ignorance of the points that France intended to attack, the English would be led to disperse their forces in order to be able to repel us everywhere.¹¹⁶

On July 20, a very violent north-northeast wind rose on the harbor of Boulogne. The embossing line included a large number of vessels whose situation immediately became very critical. The sea was low. The ships that were to windward of the jetties dropped all their anchors in order to wait for the favorable moment to enter the port; those that were to leeward set sail, trying to rise to windward. The barges and caiques, which were open boats, suffered greatly. Some sank in the harbor; others, wanting to take refuge in Boulogne, missed the entrance and threw themselves on the coast. Boats sailed downwind, trying to reach a leeward port; some perished at sea, others were able to reach Étaples, Saint-Valery-sur-Somme or Dieppe. The night, which was very bad, brought new misfortunes. The Emperor, who arrived on July 19, spent the night at Fort de l'Heurt, giving orders to rescue the stranded vessels. This bad weather cost the lives of several hundred men.

The boats of the flotilla, built in Paris and in the departments crossed by tributaries of the Seine, came to Le Havre where they completed their armament. When there were a sufficient number of boats in a state to put to sea, a convoy was formed which left for Boulogne under the direction of officers specially charged with this service. The English cruise, which was making useless efforts to intercept these ships, decided to bombard Le Havre.¹¹⁷

This operation, carried out on July 23, did not cause us any damage; a second bombardment took place on the 26th. That day, eighteen gunships, twelve gunboats, barges and caiques, under the command of Captain Daugier, formed a line of bombardment in the harbor. The fire from these vessels forced the bombardiers to take up a position far from land, which put the city out of reach of their projectiles. The action had been going on for some time when part of the flotilla, led by Frigate Captain Baste, headed towards the bombardiers. They took to the open sea and the fighting ceased.

On August 16, while the Emperor was solemnly distributing the crosses of honor to the army, forty-five ships of the flotilla, coming from Le Havre, under the command of ship captain *Daugier*, entered the port, victoriously repelling the enemy. Among the festivities celebrated on the same day in the ports of the new empire, two had a particular interest for the navy. These were the double inauguration of the Antwerp arsenal and the Cherbourg dike. The Emperor wanted to make Antwerp a large construction port. The stores, workshops, construction sites, barracks, were already finished; three ships and some lower-ranking buildings were almost finished. Work on the Cherbourg dike was being carried out with no less activity; the isolated jetty, with lost stones, built under the skillful direction of the engineer Cachin, advanced. Over a certain area, it rose twelve feet above the level of the highest tides. A battery of forty pieces of cannon and twelve mortars, established on this point, kept the enemy at a distance.¹¹⁸

The English still had considerable forces in front of Boulogne. In August 1804, the cruise consisted of twenty ships under the command of Rear-Admiral Louis, who had his flag on the fifty-gun *Leopard*. The bulk of the enemy forces were anchored about ten miles northwest of the port. A few ships were keeping closer to land to monitor our movements; these were a little beyond the range of our guns. On August 25, the brig *Bruiser*, having approached the embossing line, Admiral Bruix ordered a division of the flotilla, commanded by Captain Le Ray, to head for this ship. The first cannon shots had barely been fired when the frigate *Immortalité* joined the *Bruiser*. After a cannonade, which lasted a short time, the enemy withdrew. The next day, at daybreak, some boats of the flotilla, coming from the north, were reported. They were seen hugging the coast closely, under the protection of the land artillery; after having rounded Cape Grinez, they were attacked by the brigs *Archer* and *Bloodhoum*. Captain Le Ray went to the aid of these ships; a second division of the flotilla and two sections of barges were sent to him. The frigate *Immortalité*, the brigs *Harpy* and *Adder* and the cutter *Constitution* immediately headed towards our ships. The action began, on both sides, with great vivacity. The Emperor was in the harbor, in his boat, where were the ministers of war and of the navy, the commander-in-chief of the flotilla, Vice-Admiral Bruix, and Marshals Soult and Mortier. He headed, by dint of oars, towards the point where the fighting was taking place.¹¹⁹

The winds were north. The French and English ships that were sailing along the open sea tacked. The Emperor, having joined ours, at the moment when they were approaching land, gave the order by signal to close fire on the enemy. Our ships immediately went to the English division and for a moment the fire was very intense. A bomb fell on the cutter *Constitution*, went through its decks and smashed it; this ship sank, but the crew was saved. A bomb hit the brig *Harpy*; *Immortalité* received several projectiles. The English, whose ships were beginning to suffer, moved away.

VI

The Toulon squadron, commanded by Vice-Admiral Latouche-Tréville, played, as we have seen above, the principal role in the plan of campaign which was to ensure the passage of the Boulogne flotilla. Vice-Admiral Latouche-Tréville was worthy of the confidence shown in him by the Emperor. The Brest squadron, when this admiral took command of it, after Admiral Bruix, at the beginning of the year 1800, was in the saddest situation. The crews, poorly fed, penniless, barely clothed, committed continual acts of indiscipline. Desertions were numerous. The discouraged staffs opposed a sort of inertia to the orders of their leaders.¹²⁰

Latouche-Tréville did not shy away from any of the difficulties of his task. He gave instructions for the maintenance and cleanliness of the vessels, the execution of which he himself supervised. The exercises were carried out regularly. The midshipmen were sent aboard the ships that were setting sail; as for the officers, they practiced naval maneuvers in the squadron's boats. Ships, anchored in the main harbor, were ready to moor or set sail at the first signal. A division of the squadron set sail whenever the weather permitted. In one of these sorties, two frigates collided. The captain, whose manoeuvre had brought about this unfortunate result, appeared before a board of inquiry which concluded that he was not guilty. The admiral, convinced that the members of the board had mainly intended, in acting thus, to show that they disapproved of the frequent sailings of the ships and frigates of the squadron, obtained from the minister that this captain be immediately replaced in his command.

Divisions of frigates, anchored at Bertheaume and Camaret, were kept in a state of continual activity. They received very precise orders to move forward or withdraw, depending on the forces opposed to them. A service for the protection of coastal vessels was organized; the admiral, at the head of armed longboats, often went outside the harbour to facilitate the entry of convoys. One day when success had not crowned his efforts, he wrote to the minister: "I expect, citizen minister, that I will be accused of imprudence, of temerity and of doing the job of a frigate captain, which is not suitable for an army general."¹²¹

These are the expressions of some of my good friends; I answer that those who do nothing do not commit mistakes and that I prefer those caused by activity to the vices of idleness and inertia." As there was, at that time, question of an English expedition on our coasts, the admiral organized the defense of the entrance to Brest and the harbor (1).

After having commanded the Boulogne flotilla and victoriously repelled Nelson's attacks of August 3 and 15, 1801, Latouche-Tréville was put, in 1804, at the head of the Toulon squadron. The instruction of officers, midshipmen and crews became the object of all his care. The squadron anchored in the main roadstead, ready to moor or sail. The captains and officers remained on board. The admiral concerned himself with the defence of the roadstead; in the event of an attack by the English squadron, each vessel was to send to a battery, designated in advance, the personnel necessary to arm it. On 24 May, the English vessels *Canopus* and *Donegal* and the frigate *Amazon*, under the command of Rear-Admiral Campbell, approached Cape Sepet.

1. On March 20, Rear Admiral Latouche-Tréville gave his squadron the following order, which we transcribe as a historical document: "Every morning at eight o'clock, a blue flag will be hoisted on the mainmast of the commanding ship, to which each ship will respond with the same flag. At this signal, all work on the ship will cease, and, during the five minutes that it remains hoisted, each man of the crew will be free to invoke the God of nature in the form and manner prescribed by his belief. All will be invited to stand with respect and meditation during this single moment devoted to thanksgiving, prayer or recognition that every man owes to the creator of all things."¹²²

Five ships and three frigates, setting sail promptly, made for the enemy ships, which immediately joined their squadron.

On June 13, two frigates, the *Incorruptible* and the *Sirène*, were in the Hyères Islands, heading for Toulon, with a light west-southwest breeze. Admiral Nelson had these two ships chased by the *Amazon* and the *Phæbe*. The English frigates, stopped by the calm, did not arrive until the next morning at the opening of the great pass; they saw the French ships anchored under the castle of Porquerolle. Admiral Nelson, warned by signal of the position of our frigates, ordered the ship *Excellent* to join the *Amazon* and the *Phæbe*. Such was the situation when Admiral Latouche-Tréville, setting sail with eight ships and seven frigates, headed for the English squadron. Nelson, immediately recalling the *Excellent* and the two frigates, headed out to sea under small sails.

Latouche-Tréville returned to Toulon with the *Incorruptible* and the *Sirène*. Reading Latouche-Tréville's correspondence, one is struck by the knowledge of this admiral, the vigor and energy he displayed. He possessed, which is always rare, the dual qualities of a man of action and an organizer. This was indeed the leader that the French navy needed, non-military and unaccustomed to activity; unfortunately for us, the days of this admiral were numbered. Having returned ill from the Saint-Domingue expedition, he had not been able to recover completely since his return to France. He died on 20 August on the ship *Bucentaure* which was flying his flag. Latouche-Tréville was buried on Cape Sepet where he used to go to monitor the enemy cruise and direct the movements of his squadron.¹²³

This news arrived in Boulogne at the end of August. The Toulon squadron being the pivot of the combination imagined by the Emperor, the expedition was delayed. It was necessary to give a successor to Rear-Admiral Latouche-Tréville. "It seems to me that, for the Toulon squadron, wrote the Emperor to the Minister of the Navy, there are only three men, Bruix, Villeneuve or Rosily. You can sound out Bruix. I believe Rosily has good will, but he has done nothing for fifteen years ... However, there is one urgent thing, it is to take a decision ... "

The Minister of the Navy rejected the candidacy of Admiral Rosily; On the other hand, he judged that Admiral Bruix was rendering services at Boulogne that were too important for it to be wise to move him. He had Admirals Villeneuve and Missiessy called to Paris. After speaking with each of them, he proposed to the Emperor to place the former at the head of the Toulon squadron and to give the latter command of the Rochefort squadron. "Sire," said the minister, "Vice-Admiral Villeneuve and Rear-Admiral Missiessy are here. I have spoken to the former about the great project. He listened to it coldly and remained silent for a few moments. Then, with a very calm smile, he said to me: "I expected something similar; but to be approved, such projects need to be completed. "I will allow myself to transcribe his response literally in a private conversation, because it will paint you better than I could the effect that this opening had on him..... Finally, none of this has made his courage pale. The position of grand officer, that of vice-admiral, have made him a completely new man.¹²⁴

The idea of dangers is erased by the hope of glory, and he ended up telling me: "I give myself up entirely" and that with the tone and gesture of a cold and positive decision." The Emperor approved the proposals of the Minister of the Navy. However, as Admiral Villeneuve did not inspire him with the same confidence as Admiral Latouche-Tréville, he imagined a new plan of campaign.

On September 27, Admiral Decrès received the order to prepare three maritime expeditions. To take troops, arms and munitions to Martinique and Guadeloupe and to ensure the security of these two colonies, by conquering Dominica and Saint Lucia, such was one of them. The recapture from the English of the Dutch colonies of Surinam, Demerari, Berbice and Essequibo and the conquest of Saint Helena represented the others. The first of these enterprises was entrusted to Admiral Missiessy and the last to Admiral Villeneuve. Rochefort's squadron was to sail as soon as Villeneuve's departure was known. After having accomplished his mission, Admiral Missiessy would await Villeneuve at Martinique. The latter, having, on his arrival, fourteen ships and eight frigates under his command, would put the English islands to contribution, would throw twelve hundred men, arms and munitions into Santo Domingo, where the brave General Ferrand still held out, and he would do as much harm as he could to the important island of Jamaica. These various operations completed, Villeneuve would move on to Ferrol; releasing the five French ships that were in this port, he would anchor, on the roadstead of the island of Aix, with nineteen ships.¹²⁵

The Emperor assumed that the squadrons of Toulon and Rochefort, putting to sea with troops, which England would soon learn, would bring considerable forces with them. The English, unaware of the purpose of these expeditions, would send squadrons in several directions. It would be then that Admiral Ganteaume, taking advantage of bad weather that would allow him to hide his sortie from the enemy, would set sail, having on his ships the troops of Marshal Augereau. He would go to Ireland, passing far from any land, and would disembark the troops in the bay of Lough Swilly. Putting back to sea, thirty-six hours after having anchored, Ganteaume would present himself before Cherbourg, where he would learn what his squadron should do to protect the passage of the flotilla. The Emperor thought that Villeneuve would leave in October, Missiessy in November and Ganteaume at the end of December. The descent into England was therefore postponed until the beginning of the year 1805. Twenty-nine gunships, forty gunboats and twenty barges which were in Lorient and Brest were disarmed. The personnel of these vessels were placed at the disposal of Vice-Admiral Ganteaume to complete the crews of his squadron.

VII

The English formed the plan to set fire to the vessels which formed the embossing line, on the roadstead of Boulogne. They hoped that in the disorder and confusion that would follow the destruction of these ships, they could approach the port and bombard it.¹²⁶

Small vessels, cutters, schooners and brigs, were converted into fire ships. Wooden chests were built, twenty feet long and three feet wide; each of them contained two thousand five hundred kilograms of powder and, above this powder, fifty-four large balls, filled with fireworks. These balls were joined two by two by a chain; their composition included nitre, sulfur, resin and antimony sulfide. These machines, to which the English had given the name of catamarans, were arranged in such a way that their upper part remained on the surface of the water. Having no masts, they were led to the scene of action with the aid of a tow. The catamarans had, at one of their ends, a grappling hook which held them, by engaging in the cables, alongside the ships boarded. Inside the fireships and catamarans was placed a clockwork movement which was regulated according to the path that these incendiary machines had to travel. After a determined lapse of time, the hammer of a strong plate, held until then, was released; by falling, it caused the explosion. Barrels filled with fireworks formed the third type of fireships; these barrels, held vertically on the water by the arrangement of weights, exploded at the slightest shock. The British government seemed assured of the success of this enterprise.

On the 1st of October, in the morning, Admiral Keith, with the *Monarch* of seventy-four, on which he had his flag, three vessels of sixty-four, frigates and vessels of lower rank, corvettes, brigs and cutters, anchored about five miles from Boulogne.¹²⁷

The number of enemy ships amounted to fifty-two. During the day, the *Monarch*, three frigates and some light vessels came to drop anchor within gun range of our anchorage line. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville, was on Admiral Keith's ship. Pitt, accompanied by several members of the cabinet, had gone to Walmer Castle, situated on high cliffs, opposite the French shores. A nice west-south-west breeze, which bore directly on our ships, and a high tide current favored the designs of the English. Without having precise information on the incendiary machines prepared on the other side of the strait, Admiral Bruix was not unaware of the enemy's intentions and he had taken the necessary measures to face the new danger that the flotilla was running. The ambassador line included one hundred and fifty vessels. Rear-Admiral Lacrosse, who had his flag on the Prame *la Ville de Mayence*, was in charge of the command of the harbor. Gathering on board the officers commanding the divisions and sections, he decided, in concert with them, what should be done to repel the attack that threatened us. At sunset, well-armed boats and barges were sent offshore in the direction of the English. They were to announce their approach and divert the fireships.

Around half past nine, the cannon and the gunfire were heard. The English boats advanced, with the fireships, the catamarans and the barrels in tow. The fire of the howitzers with which our barges were armed, and the musketry showed the enemy that he was discovered.¹²⁸

The English boats put back to sea, abandoning the incendiary machines. These, pushed by the wind and the current, approached the embossing line where they were greeted with cannon fire. At half past ten, a first explosion was heard; others followed during the night. Their number did not exceed twelve; the last took place around four in the morning. Most of the incendiary machines, fire ships, catamarans and barrels filled with fireworks, were sunk or thrown ashore. Rear-Admiral Lacrosse was going, in his boat, to the left of the line, when he saw a vessel under sail, towards which he headed with the intention of taking it in tow. He was a short distance away when this fireship blew up, covering the admiral's boat with its debris; two sailors were slightly injured.

The catamarans did not justify the confidence of the British government. Only one, and this was as a result of a particular circumstance reported below, did us any harm. A barge, seeing a small sloop under sail, ran towards it and boarded it. Part of the crew jumped into the English boat which was found abandoned; this boat was towing a catamaran which blew up at the moment when the barge was coming alongside it. The French boat and those who were on it, that is to say an officer, thirteen sailors and seven soldiers, disappeared. The men who had gone over to the sloop entered Wimereux. In the flotilla there were six men wounded by the debris of the fireships which exploded near our ships. When day broke on October 2nd, the line of embossing presented the greatest regularity.¹²⁹

The ships, which had been forced to cast their cables or set sail during the night to avoid the fire ships, had resumed their posts. Over a very large area, the beach was covered with debris; several barrels filled with fireworks were found. Four fire ships were intact; on the first three, the fuses, intended to communicate fire to the powder load, were extinguished. The fourth was stranded near Wimereux; four soldiers of the thirty-fourth line began looking for the fuses that they supposed were on this fire ship. These brave men managed to snatch a copper box containing a clockwork that was still working.

On the night of October 1, officers, sailors and soldiers had shown as much intrepidity as composure. The maneuvers, made necessary by the various incidents of the night, had been executed with calm and precision. The sailors and soldiers had vied with each other in zeal and ardor; order had not ceased for a single instant to reign over the harbor. This state of affairs testified to the good organization of the flotilla and the skill of the arrangements made by the commander-in-chief, Admiral Bruix. A legitimate share of praise was due to Rear-Admiral Lacrosse who commanded the embossing line. Admiral Bruix wrote to the Emperor: "This event, far from having had the results the enemies had flattered themselves with, only served to demonstrate the courage, devotion and confidence of the soldiers and sailors, as well as the excellent order established for the surveillance of the city and the port. Everyone was at their post; the pumps were prepared, all precautions were taken. During the night, patrols were made there with the usual calm and tranquility, and never has there been more security."¹³⁰

Such was the expedition of the catamarans. If we put the results in view of the hopes conceived by the British government, we can say that it failed miserably.

On October 2, the wind blowing from the west-southwest increased and the weather took on a bad appearance; the English gained the open sea. Admiral Keith, with the bulk of the forces he had led before Boulogne, set sail for the Dunes harbor. Our adversaries moved away covered in confusion. They had taken the odium of this attack and had gained no advantage from it. Public opinion in England spoke out against this expedition; the press treated the ministry and especially the First Lord of the Admiralty with extreme severity. Some writers rose up indignantly against the shame that the use of such means brought upon Great Britain. Of what use, they said, will be the vigilance, skill and courage of the English sailors for their country, if such inventions are accepted? The bravest men will perish victims of combinations imagined by cowards. Marshal Soult, acting as the interpreter of the feelings of the army, wrote to the Emperor. "The English had conceived the horrible and cowardly project of setting fire, in the roadstead of Boulogne, to the ships of the flotilla which formed a line of embossing there; last night, they undertook to execute this abominable design Why did Keith not imitate the conduct of Nelson, in the year IX, and did he not want to fight our flotilla hand to hand? This enterprise, whatever its success, would have deserved our esteem: to attack cannon against cannon, bayonet against bayonet, such is the law of war."¹³¹

But a nation which employs, for its defence, only daggers, plots and fire-ships, has already fallen from the rank it claims to occupy. History teaches us that nations, when they are capable and worthy of obtaining victory, disdain the offers of the physicians of Fabricius, while at the moment of their decadence the most perfidious means are their principal resources. " A very important collection, the Annual Register, taking it in a less elevated tone, says, speaking of the night of October 1st to 2nd: "Thus ended, to the confusion of the inventors and the disappointment of the public, an enterprise in which time, labour and money were lavished and which delivered the government to the sarcasms and contempt of the country and of the foreigner. "Whether the language used by the British press was sincere and whether its criticisms would have been made if the enterprise had been crowned with success, it is permissible to doubt it. Since 1793, the English had done many injustices, committed many acts of violence; in many circumstances, they had triumphed only by using unscrupulous means. Isolated voices had been able to be raised to denounce these facts to public opinion, but the country had never seriously protested. What afflicted England, in the affair of the catamarans, was less the odious than the disappointment and the ridicule.

New encounters took place between the English cruise and the boats of the flotilla. On October 2, two divisions of gunships and gunboats left Le Havre, under the command of frigate captain Montcabrié, to go to Boulogne. They were cannonaded the next day at daybreak by an English corvette which soon set sail. This corvette, in company with a frigate and a cutter, renewed its attack in the evening.¹³²

After a very lively fire, which lasted nearly an hour, the English ships moved away. On the 8th of the same month, a corvette, which had cannonaded boats of the flotilla, anchored under the protection of a battery, near Cape Gronez de Flamanville, south of Cape La Hague, was forced to withdraw with serious damage. On October 23, around four o'clock in the evening, a division of the flotilla, under the command of frigate captain Lambour, left Ostend and headed for Calais. He had hardly put to sea when he was attacked by the English cruise, composed, at that moment, of the brig *Cruiser*, the gun-brigs *Biaseer*, *Conflict*, *Tigress*, *Escort*, and the cutters *Griffin* and *Admiral Mitchell*. The shallow draft of these vessels allowed them to engage in close-range action. Towards half past six, the weather having become very cloudy, the firing ceased. One brig, *Conflict*, ran aground; her captain, having tried in vain to refloat her by lightening her, went, with his crew, on board the brig *Cruiser*. Engagements of this kind were frequent. The activity of the English cruise did not diminish; it watched our ports, pursued the boats of the flotilla and attacked them whenever it found the opportunity. But his efforts failed in the face of the good fire resistance of our ships, their armament and the skillful dispositions of those who commanded them. On December 8, Captain Sir Home Popham, presented himself before Calais with the fifty-gun ship, the *Antelope*, which he commanded, some small vessels, a fire ship and two catamarans. He intended to destroy the Red Fort which defended the entrance to the port. One of the catamarans was carried away by the current and the other did not explode; the fire ship alone blew up.¹³³

The fort suffered no damage. The more or less sincere protests of the English people against the use of catamarans had had no influence on the government's decisions.

Time marched on. The months of October and November of 1804 had passed without the Rochefort and Toulon squadrons having put to sea. Their armament was not completely completed. The Emperor urged the Minister of the Navy to hasten the final preparations. Admiral Decrès wrote, in his turn, to the maritime prefects and the leaders of the squadrons to recommend the greatest activity; but our resources, in terms of personnel and equipment, were very limited and nothing was done quickly in our arsenals. The disorganization had lasted so many years that things were only slowly returning to normal. Knowledge was lacking in the general staff, order and regularity in the administration. Finally, in Toulon, they had wanted to increase the number of vessels from eight to eleven. The month of December seemed necessary to achieve this result.¹³⁴

BOOK IV

The Court of Madrid declares war on England. - Close alliance between France and Spain. Admirals Missiessy and Villeneuve put to sea. Admiral Villeneuve, after having suffered a violent gale, brings his ships back to Toulon. - Discouragement of this admiral. Discontent of the Emperor. The arrangements previously made for the movements of our fleets are modified. Nelson in search of the French squadron. Villeneuve sets sail on March 30. - He unblocks Cadiz and sets sail for the Antilles, followed by the Aigle and Admiral Gravina's squadron. Sending of new instructions to Admiral Villeneuve. Arrival of the Franco-Spanish squadron in Martinique. - Admiral Missiessy in the Antilles. His return to Europe. Capture of the Diamond Rock. Nelson heads for the Antilles. The Algésiras, the Achille and the Dido anchor at Fort-de-France. Plans to attack Barbados. We learn of the arrival of an English squadron in the Caribbean Sea. The combined fleet sets sail for Europe. We complete, in the Channel and in the North Sea, the preparations for the English expedition. Orders given to the Rochefort squadron. Death of Bruix. Concentration of the Batavian flotilla at Ambleteuse. Engagements with the English cruise. Nelson, learning of the departure of the combined fleet, heads for the Strait of Gibraltar. Arrival of the Curieux at Portsmouth. Orders given by the British Admiralty. - Arrival of Villeneuve on the coast of Spain. Battle of Cape Finisterre. Two Spanish ships fall into the hands of the enemy. The English maneuver to avoid a second battle. - Calder is brought before a council of war. Villeneuve anchors at Vigo, then at Corunna. He receives the very urgent order to head for Brest. The final preparations for the expedition are completed at Boulogne. Villeneuve sets sail. - He finds very fresh north-easterly winds offshore. Several ships suffer damage. The Franco-Spanish fleet goes to Cadiz. - Deep discontent of the Emperor. - The grand army heads for Germany. - Dispositions taken for the flotilla.

I

France maintained very friendly relations with Spain. Nevertheless, this power, despite our solicitations, showed the greatest hesitation to engage in this war.¹³⁵

The conduct of the ministers of Great Britain forced him to take this course. In the middle of the year 1804, the cabinet of Saint-James believed that the Court of Madrid was preparing to form a close alliance with us. He decided, although he had, on this point, only very vague information, to treat Spain as an enemy. England could thus seize the colonies of this new adversary and give her navy the opportunity to make prizes. The Court of London did not declare war on Spain; His intention to break off was only revealed by an act which showed openly the violence and bad faith that Great Britain brought to its relations with other powers when its interest was at stake. Four Spanish frigates, placed under the command of Admiral Don Joseph Bustamente, were expected at Cadiz in the first days of October. It was known that these ships came from Montevideo with rich cargoes, belonging to the government or to individuals. The British Admiralty sent Admiral Cornwallis the order to intercept them. Captain Graham Moore, of the forty-eight frigate *Indefatigable*, was charged with this mission. Admiral Cornwallis gave him the frigates *Lively* of thirty-eight, *Medusa* and *Amphion*, of thirty-two. On October 5, the English division was cruising about nine leagues from Cape Sainte-Marie, when several sails were sighted; the signal for general hunting went up to the masts of the *Indefatigable*. The English were quick to recognize the vessels they had orders to stop. At the sight of these ships approaching under full sail, the Spanish division formed the line of battle.¹³⁶

The four frigates were ranged as follows: the *Fama* of thirty-four guns, the *Medea* of forty, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Bustamente, the *Mercedes* and the *Clara*, of thirty-four. The English ships, the *Medusa* in the lead, then the *Indefatigable*, the *Amphion* and the *Lively* took up position, within pistol range, of the Spanish line. Captain Moore hailed the *Medea*; he informed Admiral Bustamente that he was charged with transmitting an important communication to him. Obtaining no response, he fired a cannon shot on the front of the flagship frigate. The Spanish division slowed its march. A lieutenant of the *Indefatigable* went on board the *Medea* and informed the admiral that the English division had orders to seize his ships. Captain Moore, said the envoy, wishing to avoid bloodshed, demanded that the Spanish ships be handed over to him without a fight. Whatever Admiral Bustamente's decision on this point, he demanded an immediate response. The English officer having returned on board the *Indefatigable*, after having failed in his negotiation, the fight began. Ten minutes had not elapsed when the *Mercedes* blew up. The *Amphion*, having no more adversary, went to windward of the *Medea*, which the *Indefatigable* was fighting on the opposite side. Seventeen minutes after the start of the action, the flagship's frigate lowered its colours. At the same time, the *Clara* surrendered to the *Lively*. The *Fama* attempted to escape; she covered herself with sails and headed for Cadiz followed by the *Medusa*. The Spanish frigate might have managed to escape the pursuit of the English ship, if Captain Moore had not given the *Lively*, after the surrender of the *Medea*, the order to chase the *Fama*.¹³⁷

The *Lively* was a superior ship; it joined the Spanish frigate which lowered its flag after a very honorable defense.

The *Fama* had eleven killed and fifty wounded; the *Clara* seven killed and twenty wounded; the *Medea* two killed and ten wounded. Of the two hundred and eighty men who made up the crew of the *Mercedes*, only one officer and forty men were saved. The losses of the English were insignificant; there were two killed and four wounded on the *Lively* and three wounded on the *Amphion*. On board the *Indefatigable* and the *Medusa*, there was not a single man hit by the fire of the Spanish. However, of these two frigates, one had fought the *Medea*, that is to say the frigate of Admiral Bustamente, and the other the *Fama*. In short, in this encounter, no maneuvers had been made. Each of Captain Moore's frigates had placed itself abeam of a Spanish ship and only the artillery had been in play. This affair had been, for the English, less a fight than a practice shoot; how else to call an engagement in which the advantages gained over the Spaniards had cost the personnel of four frigates only two killed and seven wounded. Finally, the damage to the hull and masts of the English ships was of no importance. We must therefore consider exaggerated the praise given by Captain Moore to the ships of his division. This officer wrote to Admiral Cornwallis: "The captains of the different vessels of our squadron have conducted themselves with such skill that I can claim no glory, except the happy circumstance of having found myself the oldest officer."¹³⁸

The zeal, activity, courage of the officers, sailors and soldiers of the squadron, are proven by the success which crowned their efforts."

When the events which we have just reported were known, protests arose within the British parliament. Some generous voices denounced this system of violence which undermined the honour of England. Among the speakers of the opposition, were men who had occupied the ministry some years before. Pitt returned to them the accusations directed against him. He reminded his adversaries of the circumstances in which they had acted contrary to the law of nations. These reproaches were deserved, but past faults could not absolve the current administration of acts which only the Barbarians could have committed. Lord Granville, directly called into question, responded vigorously. Being in power, he had placed an embargo on ships stationed in English ports; after having acknowledged this, he established the difference existing between this procedure and the attack of Spanish frigates. "Stop," he said, "a ship; you can release it. Sequester, seize the cargo; you can compensate the owner. Detain, imprison the crew; the doors of the dungeon can be opened. But for a ship set on fire, sunk, what remedy? Who will draw from the depths of the sea the corpses of three hundred victims murdered in full peace and will know how to restore them to life? The French call us a mercantile nation; they claim that the thirst for gold is our only passion. Have they not the right to attribute this violence to our greed for Spanish piastres? Ah! rather have paid ten times the value of these fatal piastres and not have tainted English honour with such a stain!"¹³⁹

Public opinion in England was not moved by the attack directed, in defiance of the law of nations, against the four Spanish frigates. It saw only the profit. It was only said that the admiralty would have acted more wisely by sending, in front of the convoy, a force having such superiority that it would have been unable to defend itself. The money as well as the goods loaded on the Spanish ships would have become the property of the English. The aim pursued would therefore have been achieved; on the other hand, there would have been no victims and any difficulty with parliament would have been avoided.

The odious aggression, of which the division of Rear-Admiral Bustamente had been the object, aroused, throughout Spain, a violent indignation. The Court of Madrid had only the choice between a humiliating submission to the will of Great Britain and a declaration of war on that power. Other facts, which were not long in becoming known, precipitated events. The English blockaded the Spanish ports; they captured vessels off the coast and on the coast. A convoy, carrying a regiment, had been captured. The Court of Madrid, hitherto hesitant, took the determination to make war on the English. On January 4, 1805, a treaty was signed, in Paris, by Vice-Admiral Decrès, Minister of the Navy, in the name of France, and by Vice-Admiral Gravina for Spain. The Court of Madrid undertook to have ready, by March 30, eight ships at Ferrol, fifteen at Cadiz and six at Cartagena. If there was nothing to prevent such conditions being included in a treaty, it was doubtful whether the Court of Madrid could fulfil them.¹⁴⁰

Spain had the ships it promised, but what this power did not have was the equipment and especially the personnel necessary to arm them.

At the beginning of the year 1805, the squadrons of Toulon and Rochefort had not yet put to sea. Admiral Ganteaume, who was reserved the principal role in the new campaign plan, was completing his final preparations. He was, on the roadstead of Brest, with twenty-two vessels. The Emperor, who had initially decided that the Rochefort squadron would wait, before setting sail, for the news of Admiral Villeneuve's departure, modified this arrangement. Admiral Missiessy was ordered to put to sea as soon as he could be sure of hiding his sortie from the English cruise. On January 11, this admiral was able to reach the open sea without being seen by the enemy. After remaining, for thirteen days, in cape, in the Bay of Biscay, the Rochefort squadron set sail for its destination. It was composed of the vessels *Majestueux* of one hundred and twenty, bearing the flag of Admiral Missiessy, the *Magnanime*, the *Lion*, the *Jemmapes* and the *Suffren*, of eighty. These vessels were commanded by Captains Viollette, Allemand, Troude, Soleil and Petit. Rear-Admiral Missiessy was going to the Antilles; he was ordered to burn all prizes that could delay his march. A body of troops, three thousand strong, placed under the command of General Lagrange, was embarked on his squadron. Missiessy and General Lagrange were charged with taking Dominica and Saint Lucia. In the event that unforeseen obstacles should oppose the execution of these two enterprises, the squadron was to do the enemy all the harm it could.¹⁴¹

Taking advantage of the presence of General Lagrange's troops, it would put the English colonies to work, particularly Saint-Vincent and Saint-Christophe. The Emperor wanted this type of operation to be given a very large development. Admiral Missiessy had orders to remain in Fort-de-France, if the enemy had superior forces in the Caribbean Sea; he would be joined at this anchorage by Admiral Villeneuve. If, forty-five days after his arrival, Missiessy had no knowledge of the Toulon squadron, he would leave in Martinique and Guadeloupe the troops, arms and munitions that he had on his squadron, with the exception of five hundred men that he would take to Santo Domingo. After the accomplishment of this last mission, Admiral Missiessy would return to Europe.

The Toulon squadron was completing its preparations. Villeneuve had received his instructions; he crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and joined, in front of Cadiz, the ship the *Aigle*, anchored in this port. The conquest of the colonies of Surinam, Berbice, Demerari, Essequibo, Trinidad and the supply of Santo Domingo, such was the aim of the expedition; there was no more talk of Saint Helena. A body of six thousand three hundred men, commanded by General Lauriston, was embarked on the squadron. After having cooperated in the recapture of the colonies indicated above, Villeneuve had orders to go to Martinique. The squadrons of Toulon and Rochefort, placed under his command, would cruise in front of the English islands and intercept their trade. Finally, they would bring men, arms and munitions to Saint-Domingo. Villeneuve was to sail on the Ferrol sixty days after appearing before Surinam; freeing Rear-Admiral Gourdon, who was in this port with five vessels, he would go to Rochefort.¹⁴²

Unfavorable circumstances delayed the departure of the squadron from Toulon. The weather was fine, the nights clear and the breeze, which blew from the east, was weak. Admiral Villeneuve would not set sail unless he could cover thirty leagues in the first night; it was on this condition alone that he hoped to deceive the surveillance of the English. On January 17, during the night, the winds shifted to the northwest. On the 18th, at daybreak, Vice-Admiral Villeneuve detached the ship *Intrépide* and the frigates *Hortense* and *Incorruptible* to chase away two frigates, *Active* and *Sea-Horse*, which were cruising within sight of the harbor. When these had disappeared, the order was given to sail. The squadron consisted of the eighty-ship *Bucentaure*, bearing the flag of Admiral Villeneuve, the *Formidable*, on which Rear Admiral Dumanoir Lepelley had his flag, the *Neptune* and the *Indomptable*, the seventy-four-ship *Annibal*, the *Mont-Blanc*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Atlas*, the *Intrépide*, and the *Berwick* and the frigates the *Rhin*, the *Uranie*, the *Cornélie*, the *Thémis*, the *Hortense*, the *Sirène* and the *Incorruptible*.

The squadron had put to sea with a strong northwest breeze. During the night the wind blew in a storm. On the 19th, the ship *Indomptable*, the frigates *Hortense*, *Cornélie* and *Incorruptible* had disappeared. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve learned that *Indomptable* had lost her topmasts. The foremast of *Annibal* was broken and her mainyard cracked; *Uranie* had broken her mainyard. As a result of these various circumstances, Admiral Villeneuve was deprived of two ships and four frigates.¹⁴³

On the other hand, he did not believe that the other ships were in a condition to withstand a second gust of wind. Two frigates, seen during the night, were no longer in sight; these frigates had obviously set sail to find Admiral Nelson. Thus the enemy would not be long in being informed of our sortie. After consulting with General Lauriston, Admiral Villeneuve decided to turn back. During the night of the 19th to the 20th, the wind shifted to the southwest, blowing hard and raising a very heavy sea. The ship *Neptune* dismasted its main topmast; the *Atlas* had great difficulty in consolidating its mainmast which threatened to fall. The squadron anchored on January 21 in the harbor of Toulon.

Admiral Villeneuve was very affected by this beginning; before departure, he had had illusions about the value of the ships under his command. Suddenly brought back to the sense of reality, he exaggerated, in another sense, the situation of his squadron. "I declare to you, Monseigneur," he wrote to the Minister of the Navy, "vessels equipped in this way, weak in sailors, encumbered with troops, having old and poor quality rigging which, at the slightest wind, break their masts and tear their sails, which, when the weather is fine, spend their time repairing damage caused by the wind, by the weakness or inexperience of their sailors, these vessels, I say, are in no condition to undertake anything. I had a presentiment of it before my departure, and I have just had a cruel experience of it. Fortune has not abandoned me in this circumstance; for, if I had been seen by the English squadron, it would have been impossible for me to escape, and even with inferior forces it would have put us in complete disarray."¹⁴⁴

The next day, January 22, Vice-Admiral Villeneuve, who continued to be prey to a deep discouragement, wrote to Admiral Decrès a private letter containing the following: "My dear general, the account that I give you of my departure and the details that I give you of the reasons that determined me to return will be very painful to you. I hope that you will find my determination sufficiently justified. Moreover, if it were not, I beg you to remember that I did not desire the command of this squadron, that, even more, I had ambitioned a useful career, instead of a glorious one. My wishes, on this subject, could only have increased by all that I have just experienced. I do not fear to assure you that there is only shame and confusion to be gathered in this profession. Those who see differently, I declare to be presumptuous, blind and incapable of any reflection, no less ignorant of their situation than of that of our enemies. I would see with great pleasure that the Emperor would give me a successor in this command, whether he is destined to remain in port, or whether he must return to the sea. I desire nothing else than to see my conduct, in this circumstance, justified; but I would not wish, at whatever price, to become the fable of Europe by the story of new disasters." Admiral Decrès had very old relations with Vice-Admiral Villeneuve; he knew him as an educated, conscientious, honourable officer, but weak and irresolute. After receiving the official dispatch of January 21 and the private letter of the 22nd, it seems surprising that the minister did not believe it necessary to support, with the Emperor, the request made by Vice-Admiral Villeneuve to leave his command.¹⁴⁵

The return of the squadron to Toulon produced an unfortunate impression in Paris. The Emperor wrote to General Lauriston: "I saw with sorrow your return to Toulon. I believe that your admiral lacked decision. The separation of the ships was nothing. It would be necessary to give up sailing, even in the best season, if an operation could be thwarted by the separation of a few ships. Your admiral had to, in the event that this separation took place, give them a rendezvous, off the Canaries, and give them sealed orders so that, after having remained so many days in these waters, they would open them and know where they should go; then the separations are nothing. The water that the *Annibal* was making was not a sufficient reason. This ship could have gone to Cadiz; there it would have poured its men on the *Aigle*. A few broken topmasts, a few disorders, which accompany a squadron leaving, are, for a man of a little character, events of a very ordinary nature. Two days of fine weather would have consoled the squadron and put everything in good shape. But the great evil of our navy is that the men who command it are new in all the chances of command. However, it is necessary today to make up for lost time."

The ships which had separated from the army, during the night of January 18 to 19, successively rallied the flag of the commander in chief. The frigates *Hortense* and *Incorruptible*, on their return, captured the corvettes *Arrow* and *Acheron* and several merchant ships loaded with weapons and munitions.¹⁴⁶

The *Indomptable* had lost its three topmasts and broken its foremast. It entered Ajaccio on January 19, left on February 15, and anchored in Toulon on the 17th. It was recognized that the *Annibal*, the *Uranie* and the *Incorruptible* could not continue the campaign. The order was given to arm the new ship, the *Pluton*, and the frigate the *Hermione*; the frigate the *Incorruptible* was not replaced. It would have been wise to disarm the *Intrépide*, the *Swiftsure* and the *Atlas* which were in poor condition. As the port had no ships ready to put to sea, they were kept.

II

We were counting on the departure of the squadrons from Rochefort and Toulon to draw away, far from the seas of Europe, a part of the naval forces of England. Admiral Villeneuve had returned. Admiral Missiessy, more fortunate, had continued his route, but only five ships, commanded by Admiral Cochrane, had been sent in pursuit. The Emperor modified, once again, the arrangements made to bring a French squadron before Boulogne. On March 2, he ordered the commander of the Brest squadron to put to sea, as soon as he found the opportunity, and to sail for Ferrol. Presenting himself unexpectedly before this port, Vice-Admiral Ganteaume could surprise and beat the blockade squadron; calling, by signal, the ships of Rear-Admiral Gourdon and the Spanish squadron, he would head towards Martinique.¹⁴⁷

Rear Admiral Missiessy, already gone to the Antilles, and the Toulon squadron, composed of eleven vessels, under the command of Admiral Villeneuve, would join him. All these forces, forming a total of about forty vessels, deceiving the detachments sent in pursuit of them, would head towards France, deviating from the usual route and without reconnoitering any land. Arriving near Ouessant, Ganteaume would attack the English squadron cruising at this point, then he would enter the Channel. This order was to be carried out, even though Villeneuve, due to unforeseen circumstances, would not appear in the Antilles. However, if this last hypothesis were realized, Ganteaume would have to have at least twenty-five ships. If he did not have this number of ships, he would go to Ferrol where he would find French and Spanish ships. Rallying these ships, he would go to Boulogne, recognizing Cherbourg, from where a trusted officer would be sent to give him all the necessary information on the enemy's position. Admiral Ganteaume would have to wait for him for a month if the Toulon squadron was not in Martinique when he himself arrived there. It was thought in Paris that Ganteaume, returning to Europe a month after having anchored in Martinique, would appear before Boulogne from June 10 to July 10. On March 24, Ganteaume informed the Emperor by telegraph that he would be ready to set sail the next day. He added that an English squadron of fifteen ships, cruising in the Iroise, the sortie of his army would lead to a battle whose success, moreover, did not seem doubtful to him. A naval victory, in this circumstance, the Emperor replied, would lead to nothing.¹⁴⁸

Have only one goal, that of fulfilling your mission; go out without a fight. Admiral Ganteaume was therefore obliged to wait, before putting to sea, until a favorable opportunity presented itself.

The day that Admiral Villeneuve had left Toulon, the English squadron was at anchor at Agincourt, on the coast of Sardinia. On the 19th, a little before two o'clock in the afternoon, two frigates, the *Active* and the *Sea-Horse*, were sighted, carrying at the masthead a signal meaning: "The enemy fleet has put to sea." At half past four, the English were under sail. Admiral Nelson, passing between the small island of Biscia and the coast, headed towards the south of Sardinia. He had under his command the one hundred and ten gun, the *Victory*, flying his flag, and the *Royal Sovereign*, and the seventy-four ships, the *Superb*, the *Spencer*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Belle-Isle*, the *Conqueror*, the *Tigre*, the *Leviathan*, the *Donegal* and the *Canopus*. For a long time already, Lord Nelson had been concerned about the role reserved for the Toulon squadron. The latter having transient troops, which our adversaries were not unaware of, was obviously called upon to fulfill a maritime and military mission. The English admiral focused his attention on four points, Sardinia, Naples, Sicily and Egypt. When the *Sea-Horse* and the *Active* had lost sight of our ships, they were steering south with northwest winds. The English frigates were sent in different directions with the mission of collecting information on the route followed since that time by our squadron. Some days passed during which Admiral Nelson received no news; on January 25, he learned that a vessel, dismasted of its three topmasts, had been sighted making its way on the Gulf of Ajaccio.¹⁴⁹

One of our frigates had also been seen in these waters. After ensuring that no French vessel had appeared in front of the island of Saint-Pierre, the Gulf of Palmas or Cagliari, he headed east. Having acquired, a few days later, the certainty that we had not appeared in Naples or Sicily, he continued his route towards Egypt. Thus was verified the prediction of the Emperor who had written to Admiral Ganteaume: "In all cases, the expedition to Egypt will cover the departure of the squadron from Toulon. Everything will be conducted in such a way that Nelson will go first to Alexandria." The English arrived in front of this city in the first days of February; after communicating with the Turkish authorities, who could not give them any news of the French, they returned towards the west. A little before reaching the island of Malta, Nelson acquired the certainty that the French squadron had returned to Toulon to repair the damage done during the gale of January 19. He also learned that we were making new preparations to put to sea. On March 12, the English squadron established itself in cruise under Cape Saint Sebastian. Nelson, convinced that the French expedition would sail to the east, wanted Admiral Villeneuve to believe the route free on that side. After a few days of cruising, he headed for the Bay of Palmas, south of Sardinia, where he dropped anchor on March 27. Transports, coming from England with provisions and equipment, were anchored in this bay.

Admiral Villeneuve was waiting to set sail until the *Pluton*, which was to replace the *Annibal*, had completed its fitting out. This vessel was about to leave the port when it was discovered that its mizzen mast was broken; further delays became necessary.¹⁵⁰

On March 30, the squadron put to sea. It was composed of the eighty-ship *Bucentaure*, on which Admiral Villeneuve had his flag, the *Formidable*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir Lepelley, the *Neptune* and the *Indomptable*, the seventy-four-ship *Pluton*, the *Mont-Blanc*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Atlas*, the *Intrépide*, the *Scipion* and the *Berwick*. These ships were commanded by Captains Magendie, Letellier, Maistrat, Hubert, Cosmao Kerjulien, Lavillegris, Villemandrin, Rolland, Depéronne, Berrenger and Filhol Camas. The frigates *Rhin*, *Hermione*, *Cornélie*, *Thémis*, *Hortense* and *Sirène* were attached to the squadron. The expeditionary force, placed under the command of General Lauriston, was now only three thousand three hundred and thirty men strong. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve had received new instructions. After having rallied, in front of Cadiz, the French ship *Aigle* and six Spanish ships under the command of Admiral Gravina, he was ordered to go to the Antilles. If he found Admiral Missiessy's squadron, he would range it under his flag. Admiral Villeneuve was informed that the Brest squadron, twenty-two ships strong, would leave for Martinique as soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself. Admiral Ganteaume was called upon to take command of all the naval forces assembled at Martinique. If Villeneuve arrived first, he was to be ready to sail at the first signal. In all probability, Ganteaume would not anchor; this admiral, as soon as he had made contact, would head for Europe. If forty days passed without Ganteaume appearing, Villeneuve would go to Santo Domingo where he would leave some troops and from there to the Cape Verde Islands.¹⁵¹

After remaining on a cruise for twenty days, in sight of a bay that the ministerial instructions designated under the name of San Yago, in the Canaries, without having knowledge of the Brest squadron, Villeneuve would go to Cadiz where he would find orders. He was advised, during his stay in Martinique, to ask for provisions from the colony in order to spare his people.

Assuming that Lord Nelson had remained on a cruise under Cape Saint Sebastian, Vice-Admiral Villeneuve directed his route off the Balearic Islands. As soon as he was at sea, the difficulties of his task reappeared, and discouragement once again took hold of his mind. The mission with which he was charged required very great speed of movement; the means of obtaining it did not exist. It seemed that, in the port of Toulon, there had been, under the pressure of orders from Paris, no other concern than to act quickly. The *Pluton*, which had replaced the *Annibal*, was a new ship. Admiral Villeneuve would have liked it to make a sortie before putting to sea. This test seemed all the more necessary to him since Captain Cosmao showed little confidence in the stability of his ship; this request had been rejected.

The *Formidable* and the *Intrépide*, although covered with sails, followed the squadron with difficulty; the *Atlas* was moving so badly that the admiral had it towed by the *Neptune*. On the 31st, our squadron was sighted by two English frigates, the *Active* and the *Phæbe*. One of them covered itself with sails to carry to Admiral Nelson, who was still in the Bay of Palmas, the news of our sortie; the second disappeared the following night. On April 1, the captain of a Ragusan ship informed us that he had seen, a few days before, the English squadron south of Sardinia.¹⁵²

Immediately changing the direction followed from Toulon, Admiral Villeneuve made his way between the Balearic Islands and the coast of Spain. On the 6th, he appeared before Cartagena where there were six ships. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve proposed to Rear-Admiral Salcedo, who commanded them, to follow him; the latter, who had not received orders from his government, declined this offer. On the 8th, the French squadron crossed the Strait of Gibraltar; on the 9th, Admiral Villeneuve, pushing out to sea Vice-Admiral Sir John Orde who was blockading the port with five ships, anchored outside the Bay of Cadiz. The French ship *Aigle* and the Spanish ships *Argonauta*, *America*, *Espana*, *San Rafael*, *Firme* and *Terrible* set sail. These ships anchored near the French squadron, with the exception of the *San Rafael* which ran aground in the passes.

According to the conventions agreed between France and Spain, Admiral Villeneuve was to exercise the command in chief, but Admiral Gravina retained the particular command of the Spanish ships. The combined squadron set sail during the night; the beginning of its navigation was not happy. On the 10th, at daybreak, the *Argonauta*, carrying the flag of Admiral Gravina, was the only Spanish ship that was with ours. That day and the following night, few sails were made to await the stragglers. On the 11th, only one ship, the *America*, joined the squadron; the latter continued on its way. The captains of the *Firme*, the *Terrible*, the *Espana* and the *San-Rafaël*, after opening the packages which had been given to them, set sail for Martinique, the rendezvous indicated in case of separation.¹⁵³

On April 3, the day when news broke in Paris of the departure of the Toulon squadron, Admiral Ganteaume had not left his anchorage. Given the difficulties this admiral was having in leaving Brest, the Emperor wondered whether he would not be forced to modify his campaign plan once again. Admiral Ganteaume, not setting sail, was holding back twenty ships in front of Brest. On the other hand, Admiral Missiessy, who had left for the Antilles on January 11, was expected in Rochefort where his presence would result in bringing an enemy cruise into the gulf. Finally, the English were obliged to have a squadron in front of Ferrol, since there were, in this port, French and Spanish vessels on which there were landing troops. In these conditions, it seemed preferable to order Villeneuve to return to Europe without waiting for Admiral Ganteaume. Villeneuve would round Ireland and present himself in front of Boulogne with his twelve vessels and the six of Gravina. Instructions were prepared to this effect. Rear-Admiral Magon, who was in the harbor of the island of Aix with two vessels, received the order to be ready to sail. However, before sending him to Martinique, the Emperor wanted to wait a few days, hoping that a gust of wind would allow Ganteaume to set sail. On the 12th, no news of Villeneuve's arrival in front of Cadiz had reached Paris; we were beginning to feel some anxiety about the fate of the Toulon squadron. Perhaps it had encountered the enemy. The Emperor, wishing to take advantage of the absence of the English cruise before Rochefort, was on the point of sending Rear-Admiral Magon to the Antilles with troops, when it was learned that Villeneuve, after having appeared off the coast of Cadiz, had continued his route with the *Aigle* and the ships of Admiral Gravina.¹⁵⁴

There was no longer any reason to fear, according to the disposition of the naval forces of England, that the combined squadron would find any obstacle preventing it from reaching its destination. All our concern must therefore now be directed to the Brest squadron. The season, which was becoming fine, diminished, every day, the chances that Admiral Ganteaume could have of setting sail without being seen by the enemy. The Emperor stopped at the thought of recalling Villeneuve to Europe. However, he did not have him return directly to Boulogne; it was towards the Ferrol that he ordered him to head. Rear-Admiral Magon left for Martinique with the *Algésiras*, on which he had his flag, and the *Achille*; he was to give Admiral Villeneuve the new instructions from the Emperor. If, thirty-five days after the arrival of Rear-Admiral Magon, Admiral Villeneuve had no news of Ganteaume, he would go to Ferrol. There he would find fourteen French and Spanish vessels, which, joined with the eleven vessels that had left Toulon, the *Aigle*, the two vessels of Rear-Admiral Magon and the six vessels of Gravina, would form a squadron of thirty-four vessels. After having made this junction, he would present himself before Brest. Joined by the twenty-two vessels of Admiral Ganteaume, he would enter the Channel and arrive, before Boulogne, at the head of fifty-six vessels. If this hypothesis were realized, the command of the army would be devolved to him. A few days after the departure of Rear-Admiral Magon, the frigate *Didon* was sent to Martinique. It carried a copy of the instructions sent by the *Algésiras*.¹⁵⁵

However, Admiral Villeneuve was to remain in the Antilles for only thirty days. Finally, he was warned that the Brest squadron would remain at anchor if, by May 29, it had not managed to put to sea.

III

Vice-Admiral Villeneuve anchored in the bay of Fort-de-France on May 14. The frigates *Hermione* and *Hortense*, detached ahead, had captured the corvette *Cyane*, one hundred and twenty miles from Martinique. The vessels *Firme*, *Terrible* and *España* and a frigate, *Santa-Magdalena*, arrived the same day as the French squadron. The *San Rafael* joined the army on May 16. The extreme slowness of the crossing made by the combined squadron was a bad omen. In reporting to the minister of his arrival at Martinique, Admiral Villeneuve complained of the progress of the *Formidable*, the *Intrépide* and the *Atlas*. How, with such ships, could he deceive the enemy as to his movements? The new ship, the *Pluton*, was a very mediocre vessel. It sailed well downwind, but, close-hauled, it drifted a lot and carried the sail badly. "All the iron that has been used on the ship," wrote Admiral Villeneuve to the minister, "is of the poorest quality. The buckles and hooks for the guns, the boomsprit rings, the buckles of the boats, everything breaks and causes unfortunate accidents."¹⁵⁶

The same is true on board the ships that were last repaired in the Toulon arsenal. The sails and ropes are also of very poor quality. "The Spanish ships," said the admiral, "are very poorly equipped with sailors, and although I am not very satisfied with our armament, I consider myself fortunate when I compare it to that of our allies."

At the time when the Toulon squadron was anchored in the harbor of Fort-de-France, Admiral Missiessy was no longer in the Caribbean Sea. We have said that this admiral, skillfully deceiving the English cruise, had left Rochefort on January 11. Thwarted by the westerly winds, he had not arrived in Martinique until February 20. The next day, he put to sea again; on the 22nd, his squadron appeared before Dominica. The expeditionary troops, under the command of General Lagrange, seized the town of Roseau. Nineteen merchant ships, which were in the port, fell into our hands. The English garrison withdrew to Fort Rupert, located in the middle of the island. General Lagrange, considering that he did not have sufficient forces to attack the English with advantage, decided to evacuate Dominica. He struck the town of Roseau with a war contribution. After having landed, at Guadeloupe, the troops, equipment and supplies intended for this colony, the French squadron presented itself successively before the islands of Saint-Christophe, Nieves and Montserrat. On these various points, war contributions were levied. During the course of these expeditions, our ships captured about twenty merchant ships. Admiral Missiessy returned to Fort-de-France where he learned of the return to Toulon of Vice-Admiral Villeneuve.¹⁵⁷

Leaving in Martinique the reinforcements he had for this colony, he headed for Santo Domingo. General Ferrand, who occupied the eastern part of Santo Domingo with a handful of men, had a pressing need for help. The admiral landed troops, weapons, munitions and provisions; then he set sail for Europe. His squadron anchored, on May 20, in the harbor of the island of Aix. During the course of this cruise, Admiral Missiessy had not sighted the enemy. If it is fair to say that this expedition was conducted with speed, it must, on the other hand, be recognized that it did not achieve the goal assigned to it by the government. No conquest was made in the Caribbean Sea; and this was the principal object that Rochefort's squadron was to fulfil. The very rapidity of its movements became an obstacle to the execution of the general plan in which it played a part. Its prompt departure did not allow it to receive the order to await the arrival of the combined squadron.

A mile from the south-eastern tip of the island of Martinique and six miles from the entrance to the bay of Fort-de-France is an islet called the Diamant. The height of this rock does not exceed two hundred metres and its circumference is less than a mile. It can only be approached from the west and with great difficulty. Commodore Samuel Hood had seized this position in 1804. He had armed it with three twenty-four-pounder guns and two eighteen-pounders; the garrison was composed of one hundred and twenty-eight men, commanded by a lieutenant. Diamant, with its long-range cannons, worried the coastal vessels and hampered the movements of ships entering the bay of Fort-de-France.¹⁵⁸

The Emperor had shown himself very unhappy that Rear-Admiral Missiessy had not taken this rock from the English. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve took, at the request of the Captain General of Martinique, the necessary arrangements to take control of it. On May 31, Captain Cosmao-Kerjulien appeared, in front of Diamant, with the ships *Pluton* and *Berwick*, the frigate *Sirène*, the brig *Argus* and the schooner *Fine*. This division carried three hundred landing men. The fire from the ships forced the besieged to evacuate the lower part of the rock. Some French and Spanish sailors having succeeded in penetrating the cavity where the provisions were deposited, the English surrendered.

Admiral Nelson, as has been said above, had anchored on March 27 in the Bay of Palmas to resupply his ships. On April 4, he learned from the frigate *Phoebe* that the French squadron had left Toulon. He immediately sent cruisers in different directions to obtain information on the route followed by Villeneuve. For forty-eight hours the English squadron remained between the south of Sardinia and the coast of Africa. On the 7th, Admiral Nelson headed for Sicily. Convinced that the mission with which Villeneuve was charged called him to the east of Toulon, he supposed that we had passed to the north of Corsica. On the 9th, the English, who had not heard from us, decided to return towards the west. On the 16th, they were informed, by a neutral vessel, that the French squadron had been seen, on the 7th, under Cape Gates. A few days later, Admiral Nelson learned that Villeneuve had crossed the strait. Owing to the persistence of the westerly winds, the English did not reach Gibraltar until April 30th.¹⁵⁹

They anchored, on May 4, in the bay of Mazari, on the coast of Africa, to take on water and take on some provisions. On the 5th, the winds having become favorable, the English squadron headed west, but the weakness of the breeze forced it to anchor at Gibraltar. Admiral Nelson had always been firmly convinced that the Toulon squadron would not leave the Mediterranean. Knowing that it was in the Ocean, he searched in vain for the goal pursued by the French government. Not imagining that the latter could have any other objective than Ireland, he formed the project of going fifty leagues off the coast of the Scilly Isles. Special information, received at Gibraltar, led him to modify this resolution; he decided to sail for the Antilles.

The English squadron anchored in the bay of Lagos to stock up on provisions. Admiral Nelson had been warned that ships, carrying five thousand soldiers, were on their way to the Mediterranean. Leaving the bay of Lagos, he established himself in cruise under Cape Saint-Vincent to protect the passage of these ships. They arrived on May 12, accompanied by two vessels. Fearing that this convoy would be intercepted by Admiral Salcedo who commanded, in Cartagena, a squadron of six vessels, Nelson added the Royal-Sovereign to the escort. The same day he proceeded to the West Indies with the *Victory* of one hundred and ten, carrying his flag, the *Superb*, the *Spencer*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Belleisle*, the *Conqueror*, the *Tigre*, the *Leviathan*, the *Donegal*, of seventy-four-and-twenty, and the *Canopus* of eighty. The English squadron passed, on the 15th of May, before Madeira; on the 29th, the frigate *Amazon* was sent to Barbados. She carried to Admiral Cochrane the news of Nelson's arrival and the order to be ready to set sail with the five ships composing his division.¹⁶⁰

On June 4, the English anchored in Carlisle Bay. Rear-Admiral Cochrane was in the harbor, but he had only two ships with him; the other three were in Jamaica with Admiral Dacres.

Villeneuve and Gravina awaited Admiral Ganteaume with the greatest impatience. Since the Brest squadron was not to enter Fort-de-France Bay, they had made arrangements to sail as soon as it was reported. Such was the situation when the frigate *Didon* first, then Rear-Admiral Magon, with the *Algésiras* and the *Achille*, arrived at Martinique, bringing the new instructions. Among the dispatches delivered to Admiral Villeneuve, there was one containing the following: "The letters you have received so far, Mr. Vice-Admiral," said the Minister of the Navy, "all agree on this point that your stay in the Windward Islands should be marked by the conquest of English possessions, or at least by expeditions which would destroy for a long time the prosperity of the establishments belonging to the enemy." "How," replied Admiral Villeneuve, "could I have found the order to make expeditions against enemy possessions in instructions which prescribe me, on arriving at Martinique, to replace my water as quickly as possible, to always be ready to sail at the first signal given to me by Admiral Ganteaume, who must pass and not even anchor, to have myself fed from the colony's stores during the stay that I will make at Martinique and that on the execution of these measures and the destinies of the naval army depend the destinies of the world; when, for his part, General Lauriston had the order to disembark, on arriving at Martinique, the greater part of his troops, his artillery and his war munitions?"¹⁶¹

General Lauriston had orders to disembark, upon arriving in Martinique, the majority of his troops, his artillery and his war munitions? Well! all that has been done; the men and the artillery are on land. " Already, in a previous dispatch, the ministry had shown a negligence that was difficult to explain. We recall that the instructions given to Admiral Villeneuve, when he left Toulon, on March 30, said that if, forty days after his arrival in the Antilles, Admiral Ganteaume had not appeared, he would put to sea with the Franco-Spanish squadron. "You will go," the minister had written to him, "to the bay of San-Yago in the Canaries." "I do not know of San Yago Bay in the Canaries," the admiral had replied, "but as the object of the cruise I must make is to seek to intercept the convoys going to and coming from India, I suppose that it is the island of San Yago and the roadstead of Praya, in the Cape Verde Islands, that must be in question, and it is towards this point that I will head to establish a cruise there, as far as my provisions will allow me."

This new wait of thirty days, imposed on the combined squadron, raised serious difficulties. It was not enough to remain in the Antilles, it was necessary to live there and, moreover, by putting to sea, to have the necessary supplies to complete the campaign. The squadron had left with six months of provisions for the crews; the embarkation of the passenger troops had reduced these six months to four and a half months. It was not certain that the authorities of Martinique would manage, even at the cost of the greatest efforts, to provide a full month's worth of provisions to the squadron.¹⁶²

If the latter, after having remained thirty days in the Antilles, did not make a rapid crossing, it would arrive on our coasts, no longer having freedom of movement. The minister said nothing of this question, the weight of which fell on the leader of the squadron. The instructions that the Algeciras had brought prescribed that conquests be made in the Caribbean Sea. Unfortunately, time had passed and any surprise had become impossible. The frigate, *Mercury*, sent by Admiral Orde to announce that the Toulon squadron had put to sea, had arrived, on May 2, in Barbados. In all the English islands, martial law had been proclaimed and preparations for defense had been pushed forward with activity. The forts and batteries had been armed and the militias had been put on foot. The merchant ships, sheltered in the closed ports, were out of reach. Finally, by the very nature of its mission, the squadron had to maintain a mobility that prohibited any siege operation. Admiral Villeneuve, not wanting to be too frequent, decided to attack Barbados. After embarking some troops, the combined squadron set sail. On the 8th, it captured fourteen merchant ships; a schooner, charged with escorting this convoy, was the only one to escape. The prisoners reported that an English squadron, strong, they said, of fourteen ships, had been in Barbados for several days. This news was extremely important. These fourteen vessels, if they existed, joined to the five vessels of Admiral Cochrane, formed a squadron of nineteen vessels, equal if not superior to the fourteen French vessels and the six Spanish vessels of Admirals Villeneuve and Gravina. Renouncing not only the capture of Barbados but any conquest in the Caribbean Sea, Admiral Villeneuve, in agreement on this point with Admiral Gravina, decided to return to Europe.¹⁶³

The *Seine* was given the mission of taking the captured convoy, on June 8, to the first port it could reach. The troops, destined for the Barbados expedition, were ordered to pass on the *Hortense*, the *Hermione*, the *Didon* and the *Thémis*, which were responsible for taking them to Guadeloupe. As soon as this operation was completed, the Franco-Spanish fleet headed north; it was to be joined, at the height of the Azores, by the frigates left behind.

The various combinations made by the French government to give the Boulogne expedition the support of a large fleet had so far remained without result. The Emperor had pursued two objectives. He had proposed to operate, in the Caribbean Sea, the concentration of several squadrons leaving our ports, by deceiving the enemy cruisers. Finally, he had thought that these squadrons would draw, in their wake, the greater part of the English forces which were cruising on our coasts. Our ships, then forming a compact mass and leaving behind them the ships sent to search for them, would have returned to the Channel. The Toulon squadron had, it is true, very fortunately reached Martinique, but this event would only have had value if Villeneuve had been joined by Admirals Ganteaume and Missiessy. Now, Admiral Missiessy was about to return to Rochefort when the combined squadron anchored in the harbor of Fort-de-France. On the other hand, Admiral Ganteaume had not left Brest. To reach the open sea, he had to fight and the campaign plan required that he arrive intact at Martinique.¹⁶⁴

In summary, the only advantage obtained consisted in having, at sea, a fleet, that of Villeneuve and Gravina, which could move to any point on the coast of France or Spain that it deemed suitable. The result of the campaign would therefore depend on the number of French and Spanish vessels that Villeneuve would add to his squadron and on the distribution of enemy forces on the route he had to travel to fulfill his mission.

England had a hundred armed vessels, but some of these vessels were in the East Indies, the Windward Islands, Jamaica, Halifax and the Mediterranean. These had no role to play in the great conflict that was being prepared. Only the vessels, spread out from Gibraltar to Texel, were called upon to take part in it. Now, England had six ships at the Dunes, five in the North Sea, twenty off Ushant, five cruising off Ferrol and six employed in the blockade of the port of Cadiz. If Villeneuve were to act quickly, the British navy could only oppose us with forty-two ships. We had seven ships in Texel, twenty-two at Brest, five at Rochefort, fourteen, five French and nine Spanish, at Ferrol and eight at Cadiz, that is fifty-six ships and adding the twenty from Villeneuve and Gravina seventy-six. The advantage would remain with the one of the two adversaries who could group his forces in such a way as to have superiority in numbers on the scene of the action. There were, at Cartagena, six ships, placed under the command of Rear-Admiral Salcedo. Our ambassador urged the Spanish government to give this admiral the order to seize the first favorable opportunity to go to Cadiz.¹⁶⁵

The port of Brest was trying to join new vessels to Admiral Ganteaume's squadron. Food supplies were being brought in at Cadiz, Ferrol, Rochefort, Brest, Cherbourg and Boulogne. In these different ports, the ships, whose armament was complete, were ready to set sail. Admiral Ganteaume's squadron was anchored between Bertheaume and Camaret, under the protection of one hundred and fifty guns. The Emperor wanted the gunboats and gunboats, which were in Brest, to be armed. These small ships, having strong artillery, could be of service if Ganteaume were to give battle to Cornwallis, a short distance from land. The Rochefort squadron was ordered to put to sea again. Rear-Admiral Missiessy, who had fallen ill, had been replaced by Captain Allemand. The latter was ordered to cruise along the coast of Ireland and to do as much harm as he could to enemy trade. He was to burn not only his prizes but even neutral vessels so that the course of his squadron would remain unknown. After appearing at the mouth of the Shannon and in the vicinity of Cape Clear, he would sail up the coast of Ireland, as if he intended to round that island from the north. Disappearing offshore, he would go back down towards the south and direct his course so as to be, from July 29 to August 3, forty leagues west of Ferrol, at latitude $43^{\circ} 32'$ and longitude $13^{\circ} 22'$. There, the Rochefort squadron would wait for Villeneuve, under whose orders it would place itself. If, on the 13th of August, Captain Allemand had no knowledge of the Franco-Spanish squadron, he would go to Vigo to obtain information.¹⁶⁶

Finally, if, in Vigo, he found no instructions concerning him, he would eat his provisions, at sea, cruising in the areas where he believed he had the most chance of harming the enemy (1). Such was the situation at the time when Vice-Admiral Villeneuve abandoned the Caribbean Sea.

The command of the flotilla had passed into the hands of Rear-Admiral Lacrosse. Admiral Bruix, who had been ill for a long time, had succumbed on March 18, 1805. Through his activity, his energy, his knowledge, this admiral had played a considerable role in the organization of the flotilla. His death, like that of Latouche-Tréville, was a great loss for the navy. While the squadrons were carrying out the movements we have just indicated, preparations for the expedition were being completed in the Channel and the North Sea. The divisions of the flotilla which had not been able, until then, to reach Etaples, Boulogne or Wimereux, were proceeding to their destination. Marshal Davout's corps, forming the right wing of the invasion army, was encamped near Bruges. It was to embark on Dutch ships assembled at Ostend, Dunkirk and Calais. The Emperor called Marshal Davout and his troops to Ambleteuse and gave the order to the Batavian flotilla to come to this port. Vice-Admiral Verhuell, closely monitoring the English cruise and seizing every opportunity to elude its vigilance, succeeded in assembling almost all of his ships at Dunkirk.

I. Captain Allemand had never managed to gain the confidence of the officers and crews he had had under his command. In the course of his career, he had known no other authority than that resulting from his rank. Before designating him to the Emperor's choice for the command of the Rochefort squadron, the minister had hesitated a lot. In informing the German commander of the favor he had received, he wrote to him: "Your future depends on you and I confine myself to recommending to you in a very particular manner firmness in service, amenity in your private conduct and dignity in both."¹⁶⁷

It remained to take them to Ambleteuse which presented more difficulties. On April 23, in the evening, a division comprising thirty-two gunboats and nineteen transports, set sail from Dunkirk. The breeze, which was from the northeast, passed to the east then to the southeast. On the 24th, at daybreak, the Batavian division, which had tacked during the night, was in disorder. Eight gunboats, carried by the current, were seven or eight miles from land. At this moment, the English cruise, composed of a frigate, two corvettes, a bombard and eight gunboats, was reported. The battle began. The ships that were offshore were surrounded and captured; the rest of the division pushed back the English and anchored at Ambleteuse on the 25th. Part of the failure we had just suffered could legitimately be attributed to Admiral Verhuell, who had not joined the gunboats with a sufficient number of gunboats. The Emperor wrote to him: "Vice-Admiral Verhuell, I am sorry that you did not send gunboats with the gunships, one serving as protection for the other. Gunboats alone do not have the strength necessary to resist brigs and cutters. Too much confidence produces failures."

On June 10, two gunships, four gunboats and fourteen transport ships left Le Havre to go to Fécamp. This division, placed under the command of Captain Hamelin, was attacked, shortly after its departure, by a frigate, a corvette, a brig and a cutter.¹⁶⁸

The action was very lively. The French division continued its route while fighting; it was four o'clock in the evening when Captain Hamelin anchored in front of Fécamp. The enemy ships sailed away, badly mistreated. Some time later, Captain Hamelin, seizing a favorable opportunity, put to sea again. After a new engagement with the English cruise, he brought all his ships to Boulogne. "I am delighted with Captain Hamelin's little affair," wrote the Emperor. "It shows well what it is possible to do with our gunboats. Say what you will, it is with men and cannon that we fight, and whatever advantage a boat has, sailing well, to take a better position, there is nevertheless a practice to be admitted and advantages which are also specific to gunboats. What do I want to conclude from this? It is that, in a fight that would take place before Boulogne, if twenty prams and two hundred gunboats were to skirmish between the combatants, they would be flies that would give terrible stings to the English squadrons. I also want to conclude that around Thermidor [11th month of the Republican Calender, 19 July – 18 August] all the gunboats around Brest must be armed, that all the gunboats in the port and others in the surrounding area must arm them, that good garrisons must be placed there and that they must go out with my squadron." Returning to the engagement of June 10, the Emperor, after saying that Commander Hamelin had fought at close range, ended thus: "It is a small affair that is charming. I want you to offer me rewards for those who have distinguished themselves."¹⁶⁹

You see that the gunboats receive cannonballs in the body, in the mast, and that they do not sink. "

On July 15, the brigs *Plumper* and *Teaser*, cruising in front of Granville, were surprised by the calm in the vicinity of the Chausey Islands. The current carried them onto the rocks, these two vessels dropped anchor. Captain Jacob, who exercised the superior command of the ships of the flotilla between Cherbourg and Granville, was in the latter port. Noticing the critical position of the two brigs, anchored too far from each other to support each other, he gave the order to frigate captain Collet to attack them with six gunboats. At three o'clock in the morning, they opened fire on the *Plumper*, which lowered its flag an hour later. Captain Collet had this brig armed with men taken from the gunboats; at six o'clock, aided by the current, he headed for the *Teaser*. A light breeze had arisen, and the latter had set sail. Around nine o'clock, the firing began; after a short engagement, the *Teaser* surrendered. In the afternoon, our gunboats returned to Granville with their prizes.

Since the affair of April 23, Admiral Verhuell had found no favorable opportunity to reach Ambleteuse. The winds had been constantly contrary. On July 17, at six o'clock in the evening, taking advantage of a light north-east breeze, he set sail from the roadstead of Dunkirk with the French prams *Ville-de-Mayence*, *Ville-de-Geneva*, *Ville-d'Aix* and *Ville-d'Anvers*, placed under the command of frigate captain Lambour, and thirty-two Dutch gunboats. The weather was dark, and it was only around eight o'clock that the English became aware of our ships.¹⁷⁰

At nine o'clock, the action began. It lasted until the arrival of the Gallo-Batavian division on the roadstead of Calais where it anchored at eleven thirty. On the 18th at daybreak, the English cruise, which had been joined by the frigate *Vestale* and some lower-ranking ships, attacked the flotilla at its anchorage. After a cannonade, in which the land batteries took part, the enemy withdrew. Admiral Verhuell set sail from Calais at three o'clock in the afternoon; Marshal Davout was on board. Arriving at Cape Blanez, the Gallo-Batavian division found itself in the presence of considerable forces. The English had a fifty-gun ship, the *Trusty*, several frigates, corvettes and a dozen brigs, bombards or cutters. The depth of the water allowed the large vessels to approach land. Admiral Verhuell continued his route, powerfully supported in his march by the fire of the coastal batteries and the mobile artillery. The *Trusty*, hit at the waterline by our projectiles, sailed to the wind and moved away. At the height of Cape Grinez, the enemy having been rallied by three frigates and a few small vessels, the combat resumed with renewed vigor. While the bulk of the English forces lent abeam to the flotilla, a few vessels, maneuvering with great boldness, placed themselves in front of the Gallo-Batavian division to block its passage. Nothing could stop our march. Admiral Verhuell, who had taken the lead of the line, doubled Cape Grinez under a hail of cannonballs and grapeshot, followed by all his ships. At seven o'clock, he anchored near Ambleteuse; an hour later the firing ceased.¹⁷¹

The engagements of July 23 and 24 were the most important of all those to which the meeting of the flotilla had given rise. The enemy had attacked us with great resolution. The skill of the arrangements made by Admiral Verhuell, the good capacity of our ships, the speed and precision of their fire had decided the success in our favor. It must be added that the Gallo-Batavian flotilla had found, in the coastal batteries and in the mobile artillery, a very serious support. This affair did the greatest honor to Admiral Verhuell; it added to the enthusiasm of the army, to its confidence in the expedition and to its desire to undertake it.

Most of the English ships that had taken part in the engagements of 23 and 24 July were obliged to leave the cruise to repair the damage they had suffered. The divisions of the Batavian flotilla, remaining at Dunkirk, set sail on 25 July; they arrived at Ambleteuse without having encountered the enemy. At the end of July, the reunion of the flotilla could be considered complete. More than two thousand ships, placed under the orders of Admirals Verhuell, Lacrosse, Courand, Savary, and Captain Leray were assembled in the ports of Ambleteuse, Wimereux, Boulogne and Etaples. One hundred thousand men, commanded by Marshals Lannes, Davout, Soult and Ney, were ready to embark. Marmont's corps, twenty-four thousand strong, was to be transported to England by the Texel squadron. Twenty-seven thousand men, camped near Calais, formed the reserve of the expedition. These troops, after the departure of the army, would have gone to Ambleteuse, Wimereux, Boulogne and Etaples where they would have found ships, returning from England, on which they would have crossed the strait.¹⁷²

With the Corps, embarked on the ships of Admiral Ganteaume, the army, disembarked on the soil of Great Britain, would have numbered no less than one hundred and sixty thousand men and ten thousand horses.

IV

When Admiral Nelson had anchored in Barbados, it was believed that there would be a very imminent attack by the French on the Tobago and Trinidad islands. On June 5, the English squadron, after embarking two thousand soldiers, set sail for these islands. Admiral Nelson was quick to become certain that Trinidad and Tobago were in no danger. He turned back, and on the 9th, off Grenada, he learned that the Franco-Spanish squadron had been sighted off Dominica, heading north. On the 12th, the English learned that the allies had left for Europe; on the 13th, they landed, at Antigua, the troops, forming part of the colonial garrisons, taken at Barbados. The same day, Nelson headed for Europe with eleven ships, namely the ten he had brought with him and one of Admiral Cochrane's ships, the *Spartan*. On the 18th, he sent the brig the *1. Curious*, Captain Bettesworth, to England, to inform the Admiralty of his return.¹⁷³

Convinced that the combined squadron was going to the Mediterranean, he announced that he was going to Gibraltar. The next day, that is to say the 19th, the *Curieux* sighted the Franco-Spanish fleet. This brig was then at 33°12", north latitude and 58° west longitude. Captain Bettesworth supposed, from the route followed by the combined squadron, that it had a destination other than the Mediterranean. Instead of setting out to look for Admiral Nelson, whom he might not have found, he made every effort to reach England. The *Curieux* anchored at Portsmouth in the first days of July.

The information provided by Captain Bettesworth was of the utmost importance. The English forces, echeloned from Brest to Cadiz, could be attacked and beaten individually by a compact squadron of twenty vessels. When Admiral Cochrane had left for the West Indies, in pursuit of Admiral Missiessy, a detachment of the Canal Fleet, under the command of Admiral Calder, had been sent before Ferrol. There were, in this port, ten French and Spanish vessels ready to put to sea and some Spanish vessels in armament. On the other hand, Rear-Admiral Stirling was blockading Rochefort with five vessels. The arrival of Admiral Villeneuve compromised these two divisions. The British Admiralty took, with as much promptitude as resolution, the necessary measures. The order to lift the blockade of the ports of Rochefort and Ferrol was sent to Admiral Cornwallis. Admiral Calder, to whom Admiral Cornwallis was to give fifteen ships, was ordered to cruise thirty or forty leagues west of Cape Finisterre to intercept Villeneuve's squadron.¹⁷⁴

According to information from the Antilles, it was supposed in London that the strength of the combined squadron did not exceed fifteen vessels. On July 15, the orders of the English government were carried out. There were no more vessels before the ports of Rochefort and Ferrol, and Admiral Calder, at the head of fifteen vessels, was heading for the cruising point assigned to him.

Admiral Villeneuve had been joined, off the Azores, by the frigates left behind, namely: *Hortense*, *Hermione*, *Sirène* and *Didon*. In the same waters, an English privateer and a Spanish galleon, which this privateer had seized, had fallen into our hands. On July 19, the Franco-Spanish squadron was about sixty leagues from Cape Finisterre with very fresh north-easterly winds. Several ships suffered damage. A few days later, the winds became more manageable, but, due to the poor quality of the *Atlas* and most of the Spanish ships, the squadron was unable to reach the wind. Water and provisions were diminishing. The number of sick people increased every day; it exceeded one hundred and fifty on the *Algésiras* and the *Achille*. Admiral Villeneuve was in great perplexity when, fortunately, the winds changed to the west. On July 22, the combined squadron was about twenty-five leagues to the north-west of Cape Finisterre. It was sailing east with west-north-west winds; the weather was very foggy. At noon, the advanced ships reported the enemy in the north-northeast. The army, which was arranged in three columns, formed the line of battle, the tacks to port.¹⁷⁵

It was placed in the following order: the *Argonauta*, of eighty, captain Rafael Hore, the *Terrible* of seventy-four, captain Francisco Mondragon, the *America* and the *Espana*, of sixty-four, captains Juan d'Arrac and Bernardo Munos, the *San-Rafael* of eighty, captain Francisco Montes, the *Firme* of seventy-four, captain Rafael Villavicentio, the *Pluton*, the *Mont-Blanc*, the *Atlas*, the *Berwick*, the *Neptune*, of seventy-four, the *Bucentaure*, the *Formidable*, of eighty, the *Intrépide*, the *Scipion*, the *Swiftsure* of seventy-four, the *Indomitable* of eighty, the *Aigle* of seventy-four, the *Achille* and the *Algésiras*, of eighty, captains Cosmao-Kerjulien, Lavillegris, Rolland, Filhol Camas, Maistrat, Magendie, Letellier, Depéronne, Villemadrin, Hubert, Gourrège, Deniéport and Letourneur. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve, Lieutenant General Gravina, Rear-Admirals Dumanoir-Lepelley and Magon had their flags on the *Bucentaure*, the *Argonauta*, the *Formidable* and the *Algésiras*.

The English came from the north-east, running on opposite tacks. Their squadron consisted of the ships *Prince of Wales*, *Glory*, *Barfleur*, and *Vindsor-Castle*, of ninety-eight; *Malta* of eighty; *Thunderer*, *Hero*, *Repulse*, *Defiance*, *Ajax*, *Warrior*, *Dragon*, and *Triumph*, of seventy-four; *Agamemnon* and *Raisonnable*, of sixty-four. The commander-in-chief of the English squadron, Vice-Admiral Robert Calder, had his flag on the *Prince of Wales*.

The fog was thick. We could scarcely make out the movements of the enemy. However, there was reason to believe, from the direction followed by the English squadron, that Admiral Calder intended to double our rearguard and put it between two fires.¹⁷⁶

Admiral Villeneuve signaled to tack luff for luff by the counter march. When this evolution was executed, the two vanguards found themselves close to each other and they immediately engaged in combat. The action extended to the center and to some ships of the rearguard. Due to the intensity of the fog, it was hardly if, in each army, the captains could distinguish their adversaries. The *San-Rafaël* and the *Firme*, which were holding the wind poorly, drifted close to the enemy line. Heavily cannonaded by the English ships which were within range, the Spanish ships very quickly suffered serious damage. Captains Cosmao of the *Pluton*, Rolland of the *Atlas*, Lavillegris of the *Montblanc*, seeing the position of these two vessels in a clearing, let the wind bear to cover them. The sight of the battlefield having disappeared again in the mist and smoke, the French vessels returned to the line. From eight o'clock in the evening the fire became less intense, and at nine o'clock it ceased completely. The English moved away, taking the *Firme* and the *San-Rafaël*. The *Firme*, surrounded by several enemy vessels, having lost all its masts, had surrendered at eight o'clock in the evening; shortly afterwards, the *San-Rafaël*, reduced to the same situation, had lowered its colours. Admirals Villeneuve and Gravina were unaware that these two vessels had been taken. On the 23rd, when daylight broke, they searched for them in vain in the ranks of the combined army. The enemy ships were sighted, to leeward about fifteen miles; three vessels, among which the *Firme* and the *San Rafael* were recognized, were towed. The English had sailed, during the night, with their tacks to port, while we had remained on the same tack as the day before, which explained the distance which separated us from our adversaries.¹⁷⁷

The combined army received the order to form the line of battle, tacks to port; at one o'clock in the afternoon, it let the enemy arrive. The breeze was light, and, at four o'clock, we were still far from the English. Admiral Villeneuve, who did not want to engage in a night battle, gave the signal to close to the wind, tacks to port; he warned the army that the plan of attack was postponed until the next day. During the night, our ships did not keep very close. On the 24th, the allies resumed the pursuit. The English showed, by their maneuver, that they wanted to avoid a new encounter; the breeze having passed to the north-east, they found themselves to windward, and, on the 25th, the two armies ceased to see each other. Our losses amounted to sixty-five killed and one hundred and forty-four wounded; the Spaniards had seventeen killed and thirty-five wounded. Captain Depéronne, of the *Intrépide*, was among the dead. The *Atlas* had been very badly treated; the damage suffered by the other vessels was of no importance. The English squadron had forty-one killed and one hundred and fifty-eight wounded. Several vessels, and principally the *Malta* and the *Windsor-Castle*, had suffered greatly.

In the engagement of July 22, which took the name of the battle of Cape Finisterre, we had twenty vessels and the English fifteen; nevertheless, the superiority of the combined squadron was purely nominal. In reality, our adversaries had the advantage. We had no three-decker ships, while four of that rank were in Admiral Calder's squadron. Finally, the weakness, from the point of view of maneuver and combat, of most of the Spanish ships and of some of our own, could not be doubted.¹⁷⁸

We will add that the two squadrons had not been able to measure each other; they had, because of the fog, cannonaded at random. Several ships of the rearguard, in both armies, had not taken part in the action. It has been said that Admiral Villeneuve should have fought again to take the *Firme* and the *San-Rafaël* from the English; it is not absolutely certain that he had the possibility of engaging in a second affair. On July 23, at five o'clock in the morning, the admiral gave the signal to take tack to port, and it was only at ten minutes past one that the army let bear on the enemy. The line having lengthened considerably during the night, our ships occupied a very large space; Finally the breeze was light and the sea rough. Several hours passed before the evolution, prescribed at five o'clock in the morning, was completed. It was a quarter to nine when the admiral signaled to form the line of battle, tacks to port. If this second movement was not executed more quickly than the first, it is understandable that the combined squadron did not steer until late in the day towards the enemy. There is reason to be surprised that Admiral Villeneuve stopped the pursuit at a quarter to four; one is even led to examine whether this maneuver did not hide the ulterior motive of not delivering a second combat. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Admiral Gravina felt very keenly the loss of the *Firme* and the *San Rafael*; however, in his report, this general officer says nothing that would allow us to believe that Admiral Villeneuve did not do everything in his power to join the enemy. This point therefore remains undecided.¹⁷⁹

The affair of July 22 had serious consequences for Villeneuve's adversary. Admiral Calder would have fulfilled his duty better, and above all he would have better understood the situation of his country and the demands of public opinion, if he had tried his luck a second time. Admiral Calder, who was of a very circumspect nature, was frightened, after the battle of July 22, by the responsibility that weighed on him. He feared that Villeneuve, reinforced by the ships of Rochefort and Ferrol, would attack him with thirty or thirty-five ships. This prospect made him retreat. Having had the good fortune, thanks to the fog and his position to leeward, to take two ships, he did not want to compromise this success. In England, it might have been said that Vice-Admiral Calder was not made to exercise a great command and no one would have been surprised that from now on he was only employed as a subordinate. Things did not happen that way; the admiral's conduct became the object of severe criticism. It was not unknown that his instructions prescribed him to prevent the junction of the combined squadron with the ships which were at Ferrol. If that was the goal which had been assigned to him, why had he not renewed the fight to achieve it? He had not wanted to, since his squadron had not gone to meet Admiral Villeneuve who expressed the intention of delivering a second fight. In fact, the combined squadron had put itself, on July 23, on the same tack as the English and had maneuvered to join them. If Admiral Calder found himself embarrassed by his prizes, he could have sunk them. The loss would not have been great; the *Firme* had been built in 1754, and the *San Rafael* in 1774. Finally, what the English, who were very afraid of invasion, did not forgive Calder was having left the field open to his adversary.¹⁸⁰

Faced with the violence of the attacks directed against him, this admiral asked for judges. Brought before a court martial, he was blamed for not having fought a second battle, on July 23 or 24, to oppose, as his instructions required, the junction of the Ferrol ships with the allied squadrons. However, the council was willing to admit that there had been, on his part, neither cowardice nor treason.

V

Admiral Villeneuve had resumed his route on the Ferrol. On the night of the 24th, the wind blew from the northeast in a strong gale and the sea became rough. On the 25th, when day broke, the army was without orders. Several ships had had their sails blown away, others had suffered damage to their masts. In the afternoon of the 25th, the weather continuing to be bad, Admiral Villeneuve decided to set sail for Cadiz. The winds, after a violent storm, having shifted to the south, the combined squadron headed again for Ferrol. On the 26th, the winds returned to the north-east. That day, Rear-Admiral Magon informed the commander-in-chief that the *Algésiras*, flying his flag, had two hundred sick. The *Achille* was in the same situation. The *Intrépide*, the *Indomptable* and the *Aigle* each had one hundred and ten sick; this figure, on the other ships, varied between sixty and one hundred and twenty. No kind of assistance could be given to them.¹⁸¹

Admiral Villeneuve decided to sail to Vigo where he anchored on July 28. Twelve hundred sick people were disembarked. Admiral Villeneuve decided to leave in Vigo the French ship *Atlas* and the Spanish ships *America* and *España*, whose poor progress had delayed all the army's operations since leaving Cadiz. On the 31st, the combined squadron sailed to Ferrol; it included thirteen French ships and two Spanish ships. Admiral Villeneuve, still worried, constantly despairing of success, wrote to the minister, informing him of his departure, that he would go to Cadiz "in the event of sustained setbacks." Villeneuve, fearing to find Calder on his route with superior forces, extended the land closely, during the night, from Cape Finisterre to the small island of Sisargua. At daybreak, the squadron arrived before Ferrol; the enemy was not in sight. Our ships were sailing downwind to enter the port, when the signal to hold the wind was hoisted on board the *Bucentaure*. The *Argonauta*, which Admiral Gravina was sailing, engaged in the passes, could not comply with this order.

Admiral Villeneuve had just received dispatches from Paris. "Your junction made with the squadrons of Ferrol," wrote the Emperor to Villeneuve, "you will maneuver in such a way as to make us masters of the Pas-de-Calais, if only for four or five days; which can be done either by uniting, under your command, our squadrons from Rochefort and Brest, or by uniting only our squadron from Brest, or by uniting our squadron from Rochefort, and by doubling, with this squadron, Ireland and Scotland to make your junction with the Dutch squadron from Texel.....¹⁸²

If, as a result of the fighting you have experienced, of some separations, or of other events that we have not foreseen, your situation were to be considerably changed, we do not intend for our army to enter the port of Ferrol. In this case, which, with the help of God, will not happen, we desire that after having unblocked our squadrons from Rochefort and Ferrol, you anchor preferably in the port of Cadiz. Europe is in suspense awaiting the great event that is being prepared. We expect everything from your bravery and your skill."

The prohibition to enter Ferrol was obviously addressed to a squadron that was considered, in Paris, as having the necessary means to continue the campaign. Joined by the French and Spanish ships of Admirals Gourdon and Grandellana, the combined fleet would have continued on its way without losing a moment. This was not how Admiral Villeneuve saw his situation. Having left Vigo with barely enough supplies to feed the crews for a month, he considered it essential to stock up on food and water. He also considered it necessary to change or repair the masts and yards that had suffered damage at sea or during the battle of 22 July. Unable to enter Ferrol, he led his ships to Corunna; his squadron found itself, at this anchorage, in poor conditions for the various works it had to carry out. Corunna offered no resources. Communications with Ferrol, the only point from which we could draw some supplies, were long and difficult.¹⁸³

Finally, the distance between the two ports added to the difficulties of the junction that Admiral Villeneuve had to make with the ships of Admirals Grandellana and Gourdon.

All these annoyances had a very strong effect on the already deeply troubled mind of Admiral Villeneuve. He could not understand why anyone wanted to execute a campaign plan, the essential conditions of which were, in his opinion, completely changed. The English knew of the arrival of the combined squadron on the coast of Spain. They had, from Cadiz to Brest, considerable forces whose concentration presented no difficulty. In the allied squadron, the personnel did not make up for the defects of the equipment by their qualities. The officers were not trained in naval combat and evolutions; the crews, insufficient in terms of numbers, were without instruction. As soon as we encountered fresh winds or heavy seas, we suffered damage. To continue the campaign under these conditions was to run towards a disaster which would bring about the ruin of the two allied navies. "If, as I had hoped," wrote Admiral Villeneuve to the Minister of the Navy, "on arriving at Vigo, I had made a quick journey from Martinique to Ferrol, that I had found Admiral Calder with six ships or at most nine, that I had beaten him and, after having rallied the combined squadron, still having a month and a half of provisions and water, I had made my junction at Brest and set the great expedition in motion, I would be the first man in France. Well, all this had to happen, I do not say with an excellent sailing squadron, but even with very ordinary vessels."¹⁸⁴

I experienced nineteen days of contrary winds; the Spanish division and the *Atlas* made me arrive every morning from four leagues, although most of the ships were without sails at night. Two north-east gales damaged us, because we have bad masts, bad sails, bad officers and bad sailors. Our crews are falling ill; the enemy has been warned. He has strengthened himself, he has dared to come and attack us with numerically much inferior forces; time has served him. Little practice in combat and squadron maneuvers, each captain, in the fog, has observed no other rule than to follow his sailor in front, and here we are the fable of Europe. "The commander of the Spanish squadron saw things in the same light as the French admiral. A partisan of the project of invasion of England, he had, at the beginning of the campaign, approved all the measures taken by the French government to bring the combined fleet into the Channel; but the extreme slowness of the crossing from the Antilles to Ferrol had, according to him, modified the position of the allies. The English were on their guard. Wherever the Franco-Spanish squadron would henceforth present itself, it would find superior and better organized forces. In the presence of a new situation, resulting from circumstances which it had not been possible to foresee, Admiral Gravina no longer believed in success. Such was the sense in which he wrote to Admiral Decrès. The conduct of this honorable admiral, towards Admiral Villeneuve, was marked by the stamp of sincerity and delicacy; he endeavoured, in all circumstances, to soften the difficulties of his colleague's position. The most cordial understanding reigned between them. Although Admiral Gravina was of the opinion of giving up pursuing the campaign, he was, as he said in one of his letters to Admiral Decrès, ready to sail at the first signal."¹⁸⁵

After losing sight of the combined squadron on the day of July 24, Admiral Calder had escorted his prizes to the north of Rochefort so that they had nothing to fear from the ships that were in this port. He then headed towards Cape Finisterre to effect his junction, according to the orders he had received from Admiral Cornwallis, with Lord Nelson. Not finding this admiral, Calder returned in front of Ferrol where he was very surprised to learn that the French had not been seen. He believed that Admiral Villeneuve had headed south; On July 31, a very fresh southwest wind forced him to leave the coast. A few days later, Admiral Calder wanted to resume his station off Ferrol. On the 9th, he was warned, by one of the ships he had sent to reconnoitre, of the presence, at Ferrol and Corunna, of twenty-nine French or Spanish vessels. He immediately headed north, and on August 14, he joined Admiral Cornwallis.

Nelson, returning from the Antilles, had anchored, on July 19, at Gibraltar. There, no news could be given to him of the forces in pursuit of which he had been for so long. However, he was certain that the combined squadron had not entered the Mediterranean. After having provisioned his ships, Lord Nelson left the strait and headed north; he had just learned that the combined squadron had appeared on the coast of Spain. Nelson, not having met Calder off Cape Finisterre, joined Admiral Cornwallis. He left him eight ships and continued his route to Portsmouth with the *Superb* and the *Victory*.¹⁸⁶

As a result of the various circumstances that we have just reported, Admiral Cornwallis found himself placed at the head of thirty-five vessels. He gave eighteen to Calder, whom he sent before Ferrol, and he kept the other seventeen to watch Ganteaume.

The Emperor, arriving on August 3 at Boulogne, made a careful inspection of the troops and the flotilla. Wanting to get an exact account of the time necessary for the embarkation of Marshal Soult's corps, he had this operation carried out before his eyes. Divisions, brigades, regiments, companies went to their posts without there being any disorder or confusion. In less than two hours, men and horses were embarked. On the other hand, two tides were enough to put the whole flotilla in the harbor. The same tests, made at Ambleteuse, Wimereux and Etaples, gave the same results. Consequently, twenty-four hours after giving the order to begin embarkation, the Emperor was able to set sail for the coast of England. The army's equipment was on board the transport vessels. Such was the situation when the news of the battle of Cape Finisterre and the release of the combined fleet at La Coruña reached Boulogne. Villeneuve's encounter with Calder's squadron had caused a loss of precious time. Two vessels had fallen into the hands of the enemy; this loss was all the more regrettable because it had produced a very unfortunate effect on our allies. The Spanish officers accused Villeneuve of having abandoned the *Firme* and *San Rafael*. On the other hand, Villeneuve had made his junction with the ships of Admirals Gourdon and Grandellana. The Rochefort squadron, watched by the English cruise, had not left.¹⁸⁷

The Captain Allemand received new instructions; there was reason to believe that he could rally the Franco-Spanish army before it arrived in front of Brest. The Emperor sent courier after courier to Villeneuve to urge him to leave Ferrol. "Mr. Vice-Admiral," wrote the Emperor, "I saw with pleasure, by the combat of July 22, that several of my ships behaved with the bravery that I should have expected. I am grateful to you for the fine maneuver that you made at the beginning of the action and which routed the enemy's plans. But I am justified in thinking that the victory remained with my arms, since you entered Corunna. I hope that this dispatch will not find you there, that you will have postponed the cruise to make your junction with Captain Allemand, sweep away everything that is in front of you, and come to the Channel where we await you with anxiety. If you have not done so, do so; march boldly against the enemy..... If you appear here for three days, even if you only appear for twenty-four hours, your mission will be accomplished. Inform Admiral Ganteaume of your departure by special courier. Finally, never for a greater purpose will a squadron have run a few risks, and never will my soldiers of land and sea have been able to shed their blood for a greater and nobler result." The Emperor wrote to the minister: "Monsieur Decrès, I received your letter of yesterday. With thirty ships, my admirals must not fear twenty-four English ones, otherwise they would have to give up having a navy. If there were any event where I should lose a ship, it would be an event that I should expect."¹⁸⁸

If Admiral Villeneuve remains on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th of August, at Ferrol, I will not complain; but if he remains there one day longer, with the wind favourable, and only twenty-four English ships before him, he is the last of men. Will it not then be possible to find in the navy an enterprising man who sees with cold blood, and as one must see, either in combat, or in the different combinations of the squadrons? ... I repeat to you what I have already told you: I do not intend that thirty French ships be blocked at Ferrol by less than twenty-four English ships, and, once Villeneuve is united with Allemand, I do not intend that the combined squadron be blocked by less than twenty-nine English ships."

Admiral Villeneuve set sail on August 10. That day, the wind did not allow the French and Spanish ships that were at Ferrol to set sail. On the 11th, Admiral Villeneuve anchored in the Bay of Arès; the next day, it was calm and the Allied ships were unable to join him. Finally, on the 13th, the combined fleet went out to sea. The forty-four-gun *Didon* was sent to look for the Rochefort squadron; she brought commander Allemand the order to go to Brest. The French frigate was encountered, a few days later, by the forty-gun *Phœnix*; after a very lively fight, which lasted nearly three hours, the *Didon* lowered its flag. It had twenty-seven killed and forty-four wounded. The English ship had twelve killed and twenty-eight wounded.¹⁸⁹

VI

Admiral Villeneuve had never held in high esteem the forces under his command, but since his return to the seas of Europe, all confidence in his squadron had disappeared. Although he had landed twelve hundred sick at Vigo, and had put some ashore at Corunna and Ferrol, he saw their number increase every day in a worrying proportion. At sea, his ships were continually breaking down; while anchoring at Corunna, most of the French and Spanish vessels had collided. What maneuvers would he perform, with such ships and such captains, in the presence of the English? Finally, he had under his command twenty-nine vessels and not thirty-four, as was believed in Paris. It was, it is true, to be joined by the Rochefort squadron, but the junction was not made, and the numerous forces that the English had on our coasts gave reason to fear that the division of commander Allemand would be intercepted. Under the influence of these feelings, Admiral Villeneuve had only one thought, to go to Cadiz. The dispatch that he addressed to the minister, to inform him of his departure from Ferrol, ended with these significant words: "The enemy forces, more united than they have ever been, leave me with little other option than to reach Cadiz." After leaving Ferrol, the combined fleet found north-east winds offshore.¹⁹⁰

She took the closest, the starboard tacks. Enemy ships, which were following the movements of our army from afar, were seen; chased by the best sailors of our squadron, they could not be reached. On the 15th of August, that is to say the day when Cornwallis, making two parts of his thirty-five ships, gave eighteen to Calder, the combined fleet was eighty leagues to the west-north-west of Cape Finisterre. The breeze, which was still blowing from the same direction, the north-east, had become very fresh; several ships suffered damage and a Spanish vessel broke its main topmast. Admiral Villeneuve remained convinced that this state of affairs would very quickly lead to numerous separations. He found himself isolated, in the midst of the English squadrons, with a few ships near him. On the other hand, a Danish ship, questioned by one of our frigates, declared that three English ships, which were in sight, a ship of seventy-four and two frigates, preceded a squadron of twenty-five ships (1). Imbued with the idea that by continuing his route towards Brest, he would expose the forces he commanded to a defeat which would be of no benefit to his country, Villeneuve decided, while he was expected at Boulogne, to go to Cadiz. On the evening of the 15th, he gave the signal to let them arrive. Admiral Villeneuve had made sure that his colleague, Admiral Gravina, approved of this determination. The wind was very fresh from the north-east; although the army was sailing astern, a Spanish vessel dismasted its main topmast.

1. The frigates were the *Phoenix* and the *Dido*; the latter was in tow of the *Phœnir*.¹⁹¹

On the 17th, the scouts of Collingwood's army, chased under Cape Sainte-Marie by our frigates, disappeared while firing cannon. The next day, the combined fleet entered Cadiz. Rear-Admiral Magon, with the light squadron, gave chase to the enemy ships that were blockading the port; but these, warned by the ships that we had pursued in vain the day before, were very far away. Admiral Collingwood took refuge in Gibraltar.

The goal that Vice-Admiral Villeneuve had set for himself since his return to the coasts of Europe had been achieved; the combined squadron had reached the port of Cadiz. If the admiral believed he had fulfilled his duty in avoiding an encounter that he considered disastrous for the forces under his command, he could not hide from himself that his disobedience to formal orders placed a heavy responsibility on him. He was well aware that the preparations for the expedition to England were complete and that all the necessary arrangements for departure had been made. The flotilla was only waiting for the presence of the Franco-Spanish army or Ganteaume's squadron to set sail. The project of landing on the coast of Great Britain, pursued with such ardor in France, and which was the object of the attention of all Europe, was abandoned. We were thus losing the fruit of several years of stubborn work. The letter that Admiral Villeneuve addressed to the Minister of the Navy to inform him of his entry into Cadiz ended as follows:¹⁹²

"But if this great armament that was entrusted to me were inevitably to be the plaything of the winds, in seas absolutely unknown to five-sixths of the sailors who sail these vessels; if their lack of unity and intelligence did not allow them to experience the slightest setbacks without experiencing irreparable damage, dispersions and the ruin of the project, by making themselves the fable of Europe; if this armament had ceased to be formidable to the enemy who had had the time and the means to recognize each other, so that a combat, on whatever point of the area that I had to travel, could promise us neither success, nor glory, nor favorable chances for the naval army of Brest to complete what we would have undertaken thoughtlessly; Finally, if the brave and respectable allied admiral, to whom I was able to communicate the wishes of His Imperial Majesty, was himself terrified, and followed me only with the devotion of despair, I had to, after having put all possible perseverance into forming the desired reunions in the plans of His Imperial Majesty, stop there where it could only result in disasters, confusion and a vain demonstration which would have forever consummated the discredit of the two allied navies."

The Emperor, who had not left Boulogne, awaited with the liveliest impatience news from Villeneuve. Any loss of time was contrary to our plans, by allowing the English to concentrate their forces in the north. Nevertheless, the Emperor did not want to despair of fortune yet. Believing that Villeneuve, after a few days at anchor, would put to sea again and head for Brest, he wrote to the Minister of the Navy: "Tell Villeneuve that I hope he will have continued his mission, and that it would be too dishonourable for the imperial squadrons if a three-hour skirmish and an engagement with fifteen ships were to cause such grand plans to fail." Finally, a letter arrived from Villeneuve, announcing that he intended to set sail on 10 August.¹⁹³

Ganteaume, to whom this news was immediately communicated, received the order to be ready to fight Cornwallis. The Emperor, fearing further delays on the part of Villeneuve, decided that the command in chief would devolve to Admiral Ganteaume. "In this situation of things," he wrote to Decrès, "it is necessary to send an extraordinary courier to Brest to inform Admiral Ganteaume of the events and to order him that, if Villeneuve appears before Brest by the Ras, he must not let him enter, take command of the naval army, and set sail to go before Boulogne. "If Villeneuve went to Cadiz, the Emperor wanted him to leave immediately with the six Spanish ships that were in that port. The combined fleet would have sailed for Brest and from there would have entered the Channel. At the repeated insistence of Decrès, this decision was not maintained.

Time was pressing. Austria threatened us in Germany and Italy. On August 22, the Emperor, having no news of the combined fleet, decided on the line of conduct he intended to follow. If Villeneuve, obeying his instructions, presented himself before Brest, the English expedition would take place. In the opposite case, that is to say if Villeneuve went to Cadiz, the army, destined to invade England, would enter Germany. Peace having been restored on the continent, our soldiers would resume their positions on the Channel coasts. However, the Emperor, thinking that Villeneuve would not dare to violate the very precise instructions which had been sent to him at Corunna, awaited, with ever-increasing anxiety, the arrival of the squadrons from Ferrol and Brest.¹⁹⁴

Such was the situation when the news of the combined fleet's entry into Cadiz reached Boulogne. Giving in to an initial moment of anger, the Emperor wanted to convince himself that Villeneuve was a traitor. He decided to bring him before a court martial on the following charges: "1. Not having landed, in Martinique and Guadeloupe, the troops that Rear-Admiral Magon had on board his two ships. 2. Having compromised these colonies by sending back to them only by four frigates twelve hundred elite men, belonging to their garrisons. 3. Not having attacked the English, the day after the battle of July 22. 4. Having left the sea free for Vice-Admiral Calder when entering Ferrol, while he was expecting five ships, and not having crossed in front of the port until the arrival of this division. 5. Not having chased to free the Didon, which had been sighted by the combined squadron, in tow of an English frigate. 6. Not having taken any account of his instructions when heading for Cadiz, instead of going to Brest. 7. Finally, knowing that the Allemand division was to go to Vigo to take his orders, having set sail without leaving him any, † thus exposing this division which was to go to Brest, while he, Villeneuve, was going to Cadiz. The thought of bringing Villeneuve before a court martial disappeared as soon as the fit of anger, caused by the entry of the combined fleet into Cadiz, had disappeared. The great army headed for Germany.

Before leaving, the emperor settled, with meticulous care, all the questions relating to the flotilla. He ordered that the ships which were at Etaples, Wimereux and Ambleteuse be brought together at Boulogne.¹⁹⁵

A division of gunboats and a section of barges were left at Wimereux and Ambleteuse, which kept their personnel. At Boulogne, four divisions of gunboats, six prams and two sections of barges remained armed. Admiral Lacrosse, who retained command of the flotilla, was ordered to send ships into the harbor and attack the enemy whenever a favorable opportunity arose. The prams, gunboats, gunboats, barges that were not armed kept their equipment. The great army, if it returned to the coast of the Channel, after having defeated the Austrians and the Russians, would find the flotilla in the state in which it had left it. Thirty thousand men, placed under the command of Marshal Brune, were charged with the defense of the coast. It was not likely that the English would make an attempt to land to seize Boulogne and destroy the flotilla. This event, however improbable it was, the Emperor wanted to foresee. He left very precise instructions, indicating the troops who were to join his army at the first order of Marshal Brune. These arrangements made, the Emperor left Boulogne. It was September 2.¹⁹⁶

BOOK V

Slowness in the reorganization of the combined fleet in Cadiz. Admiral Rosily is appointed to take command. Instructions given to this admiral. The same instructions are sent to Admiral Villeneuve. The English squadron in front of Cadiz. Arrival of Nelson. Villeneuve sets sail. The two armies [Fleets] are in presence. The Franco-Spanish fleet is in disorder. Formation of the enemy in two columns perpendicular to our line of battle. Heroic conduct of several French and Spanish vessels. Immobility of our vanguard. Loss of the battle. Seventeen vessels, eight French and nine Spanish, are captured. The *Achille* explodes. Eleven vessels, under Gravina, return to Cadiz; four, under Dumanoir, move away from the battlefield. The wind blows violently, pushing the ships to shore. Critical situation of the captured ships. Some, recaptured by their crews, return to Cadiz; others, carried by the wind and the sea, are lost on the coast. A Franco-Spanish division leaves Cadiz and forces the enemy to abandon the *Neptune* and the *Santa Ana*. The English seize the *Rayo*. French and Spanish vessels are lost in the Bay of Cadiz. The English burn several prizes. Of all the captured vessels, only four remain in the hands of the enemy. Losses suffered by the Spanish, the French and the English. Inaction of the vanguard. Responsibility in this regard falls on Admirals Villeneuve and Dumanoir. Review of the conduct of Admiral Gravina. Admiral Rosily takes command of the remnants of the combined squadron. Collingwood blockades Cadiz. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir heads north. He meets Commodore Sir Richard Strachan's division. Battle of Cape Ortegal. Despite their heroic resistance, Admiral Dumanoir's four ships are captured. Examination of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir's conduct by a board of inquiry. This admiral, brought before a court martial, is acquitted. Cruise of the commander Allemand's division. His return to Rochefort. Special engagements.

I

The Emperor thought that the combined fleet, composed of about thirty-six ships, would, for some time, be superior to the forces that the English could have on the coasts of Andalusia.¹⁹⁷

The maritime calculations that were made in Paris were rarely exact; the repairs and resupply of our ships were proceeding extremely slowly. For some time now, opinion in the peninsula had been unfavorable to the French alliance. The war, by depriving Spain of the resources it drew from its American colonies, imposed sacrifices on that power that were felt throughout the country. In the navy, the loss of the *Firme* and the *San Rafael* in the battle of Cape Finisterre had created a dull irritation against us. The Spanish authorities refused to deliver the supplies necessary for our ships; obliged to yield to imperative orders, coming from Madrid, they aroused, every day, new difficulties. We were missing, on our ships, two thousand two hundred men; we had, in addition, nearly seven hundred sick in the hospitals of Cadiz. In spite of the efforts of Admiral Gravina, time was passing and the armament of the Spanish squadron, which was to be composed of fifteen ships, was making little progress. Sailors and money were lacking; the crews were formed with men picked up on the pavements of the large cities and in the prisons. At the end of September, the combined squadron was not ready to put to sea. The English had taken advantage of the time. Shortly after the entry of the allies into Cadiz, Admiral Collingwood had returned to the port to observe us. Rallied successively by Admirals Bickerton and Calder, he was, on August 30, at the head of twenty-six vessels, seven of which had three decks. A division of five vessels, under the command of Rear-Admiral Louis, was cruising off Cadiz, while the bulk of the English army [Fleet] was seven or eight leagues offshore.¹⁹⁸

Signals, repeated by the frigates, informed Admiral Collingwood of the movements of the allied ships.

Villeneuve, by his conduct, his weakness, his irresolution, had lost the confidence of the French and Spanish officers. The Emperor decided to give him a successor; his choice fell on Vice-Admiral Rosily. This admiral received, on September 17, the order to leave for Cadiz; if he still found the combined fleet in the port, he would have taken command of it. Provided with a provisional commission of admiral, he would have hoisted his flag on the mainmast of the *Bucentaure*. Letters, which he was carrying, ordered Admiral Villeneuve to come to Paris to report on his conduct. Vice-Admiral Rosily was to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, join Admiral Salcedo in front of Cartagena and head for Naples. The troops, embarked on our ships since the departure from Toulon, would have joined the army of General Gouvion-Saint-Cyr. After remaining for some time on the coast of Italy to intercept a convoy that the English were planning to send to Malta, he would have brought the squadron back to Toulon. The Emperor did not believe that Admiral Villeneuve would decide to leave Cadiz; nevertheless, he addressed the same instructions to him. The Emperor added: "Our intention is that wherever you find the enemy in inferior forces, you attack him without hesitation and have a decisive affair with him..... It will not escape you that the success of these operations depends essentially on the promptness of your departure from Cadiz; we count on you to neglect nothing - to carry it out without delay, and we recommend to you, in this important expedition, audacity and the greatest activity."¹⁹⁹

The Emperor had already made known how he intended the enemy's forces to be assessed. "Villeneuve will see by my calculation, he said to Admiral Decrès, in a letter dated August 13, that I desire that he attack every time he is superior in number, counting two Spanish ships only for one." The Minister of the Navy wrote to Admiral Villeneuve. "The Emperor's intention is to seek in all ranks, whatever position they occupy, the officers most suited to higher commands; and what he demands above all is a noble ambition for honours, love of glory, a determined character, and boundless courage. His Majesty wants to extinguish this circumspection that he reproaches his navy with, this system of defence that kills audacity and doubles that of the enemy. This audacity, he wants it in all his admirals, his captains, officers and sailors, and, whatever the outcome, he promises his consideration and his favours to those who will know how to carry it to excess. Not to hesitate to attack inferior or equal forces and to have combats of extermination with them, that is what His Majesty wants! He counts the loss of his ships for nothing, if he loses them with glory. He no longer wants his squadrons to be blockaded by inferior forces; and, if the enemy presents himself in this manner before Cadiz, she recommends and orders you not to hesitate to attack him. The Emperor prescribes that you do everything to inspire these feelings in all those who are under your orders, by your actions, your speeches and by everything that can elevate hearts."²⁰⁰

Nothing must be neglected in this regard: frequent outings, encouragement of all kinds, risky actions, daily orders that carry enthusiasm, everything must be used to animate and exalt the courage of our sailors. His Majesty wants to open all the doors of honors and graces to them, and they will be the prize for everything that is attempted that is brilliant. He likes to think that you will be the first to receive them, and, whatever the reproaches that he has ordered me to make to you, it is flattering to me to be able to tell you, in all sincerity, that his benevolence and his most distinguished graces await only the first brilliant action that will signal your courage."

Admiral Villeneuve was poorly judged in Paris; This general officer was as brave as he was irresolute. His knowledge and knowledge of the profession showed him only too well the regrettable consequences for the allied navies of an encounter with the English. In pointing out the dangers to which we were exposing ourselves, he believed he was fulfilling one of the most important duties of his position, but he did not think of himself. Never had he been more convinced that the combined fleet would run towards disaster if it went out to seek the enemy. Unfortunately, in the correspondence he had just received, he thought he noticed that his personal courage was being questioned. Deeply wounded, he resolved to fight this battle which was so often talked about in Paris and about the consequences of which no one seemed to have any concern. On September 28, he replied to the Minister of the Navy: "I received yesterday, by your mail, your dispatches of September 16 and the instructions signed by the Emperor which were attached to them."²⁰¹

The troops will embark on Monday and I will give the signal to sail, as soon as the wind allows us to leave the bay. If the imperial navy lacks only character and audacity, I believe I can assure Your Excellency that the current mission will be crowned with brilliant success." On the day that Vice-Admiral Villeneuve wrote these lines, Vice-Admiral Nelson, appointed to the command in chief of the English fleet, arrived, in front of Cadiz, on the three-decker *Victory*, which was carrying his flag, and the seventy-four ships *Ajax* and *Thunderer*. Wanting to leave Admiral Villeneuve in ignorance of the strength of his fleet, Lord Nelson withdrew about eighteen leagues to the west-south-west of Cadiz. Two frigates, the *Eryalus* and the *Hydra*, were charged with watching the harbour. Vessels, placed far apart, but at a distance allowing them to communicate with each other by means of signals, connected the frigates, designated for this important mission, with the main body of the army. Nelson was expecting a division of two-deckers chosen from among fine sailing vessels which Vice-Admiral Thornborough was to bring him. He supposed that his fleet, composed at that time of thirty-three vessels, eight of which were three-deckers, would reach, with this reinforcement, the number of forty vessels.

Admiral Nelson had not succeeded, as he supposed, in concealing from his adversaries the real strength of his fleet. Information, reaching Cadiz, in the first days of October, made it known that he had, under his command, thirty-three vessels, eight of which had three decks. The principal officers of the allied navies were opposed to the fleet's sortie.²⁰²

In a council of war, assembled on October 5, on board the *Bucentaure*, this question was examined. The council declared that, on most of the ships of the two nations, the crews were very weak. On the other hand, several Spanish vessels had not yet been able to train their personnel at sea. Finally, the three-deckers *Santa-Ana* and *Rayo* and the *San-Justo* of seventy-four, hastily armed, and taken out, a few days ago, from the arsenal, could, at a pinch, set sail with the fleet, but these ships were unable to render the military services that were expected of them when they were completely organized. The council concluded by saying: the enemy fleet is stronger than ours; To give battle, especially when leaving the port, would be a mistake. If one wants to go to sea, one must take advantage of a favorable opportunity, for example the departure of the enemy fleet following a gale. Admirals Gravina, Alava, Escano, Cisneros and division chiefs Macdonell and Galiano attended this council, in which the French squadron was represented by Admirals Villeneuve, Dumanoir, Magon and Captains Cosmao, Maistrat and Villegris. Admiral Villeneuve, still firmly resolved to leave Cadiz, objected to the orders of the emperor. The members of the council bowed and declared themselves ready to sail. Admiral Villeneuve could have all the more readily agreed with the opinion which had just been expressed by the principal officers of the Franco-Spanish fleet, since, according to the very calculations which were made in Paris, where two Spanish vessels were counted for only one, we were numerically inferior to the enemy. The combined squadron, being composed of thirty-three vessels, eighteen French and fifteen Spanish, represented only twenty-five or twenty-six vessels.²⁰³

It was not that the commander-in-chief of the combined fleet was under any illusion about the true state of affairs. On the contrary, he had a very accurate account of all the difficulties of his task. To leave Cadiz, he had to have easterly winds, and, on the other hand, he was obliged to wait, to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, until the winds had shifted to the west. Under these conditions, the encounter between the two squadrons was inevitable.

On October 7, the winds, which had been west for several days, blew from the east. Villeneuve wanted to set sail, but the weather having become bad during the day, he had to abandon this project. On October 14, it was learned that Admiral Rosily had passed through Bayonne, heading for Madrid. This general officer was, it was said, charged with a special mission to Cadiz. This news did not cause any concern to Admiral Villeneuve, who wrote to the minister the same day: "Private letters from Bayonne announce the arrival of Vice-Admiral Rosily, charged with a mission to Cadiz. Nothing could be more pleasing to me than this news; I am in despair at always being alone in corresponding with Your Excellency on such delicate matters. The experience and enlightenment of Vice-Admiral Rosily will come to my aid in good time, and, when he has seen, I will in no way fear his judgment on the present and the past." On October 18, it was learned that Admiral Rosily had arrived in Madrid. The rumor then spread that this general officer was coming to Cadiz to take command of the combined fleet. The silence that the government kept on the mission entrusted to this general officer struck Admiral Villeneuve.²⁰⁴

He saw himself replaced, recalled to Paris. How, if he left the fleet, could he wash away the stain done to his honor. To put to sea, before the arrival of his successor, such was the thought that took possession of his mind. The same day, he was informed that six ships, detached from the English fleet, had anchored at Gibraltar. The opportunity that presented itself was too favorable for him not to seize it. The reduction of the enemy's forces, a significant reduction since it was six ships, justified the sortie of the combined fleet. Villeneuve called Admiral Gravina on board to communicate his intentions. The commander of the Spanish squadron having made no objection, the signals to prepare to sail, to unhook and embark the longboats and boats were raised to the masts of the *Bucentaure*. On the 19th of October, eight vessels passed through the passes; on the 20th, during the day, the whole fleet was out.

II

The combined fleet ran offshore, heading west-north-west, with southwest winds. The breeze having freshened, the order was given to take reefs. The inexperience of the crews was immediately apparent; several newly armed Spanish vessels fell to leeward. Twelve French and Spanish vessels formed a squadron which took the name of reserve or observation squadron.²⁰⁵

This was placed under the special direction of Admiral Gravina, having with him Rear Admiral Magon, whose flag was flown on the *Algésiras*. Twenty-one ships, divided into three squadrons, remained under the direct orders of Vice Admiral Villeneuve. The latter commanded the first squadron, Vice Admiral Alava the second and Rear Admiral Dumanoir Lepelley the third. The winds having approached from the west, the fleet, arranged in three columns, set sail, tacks to starboard. The observation squadron stood on the right of the fleet. A few frigates were sighted. The admiral had them chased by the light squadron, but they were not able to reach them. Around half past eight in the evening, the brig *Argus*, sent by Admiral Gravina, passed within earshot of the *Bucentaure*. Its captain announced that eighteen vessels had been seen in the southwest by the *Achille*. Admiral Villeneuve reported: "the line of battle, tacks to starboard, without regard to the position assigned to each vessel, forming up on those which were furthest to leeward." The observation squadron maintained its position to windward of the army. During the night, numerous signals, made either with fires or with cannon shots, showed that the English were not far away.

Admiral Nelson, having been informed of the departure of the allied squadrons, had headed towards the Strait of Gibraltar in order to close the entrance to the Mediterranean to us. On the 20th, at daybreak, he was under Cape Spartel, impatiently awaiting information on the direction we had taken. Informed in the morning of our position, the English headed north. On the 21st, when day broke, the two fleets found themselves face to face; they were separated by a distance of two to three leagues.²⁰⁶

The English fleet consisted of twenty-seven ships, seven of which had three decks. Admiral Villeneuve signaled the line of battle, starboard tack, natural order. Admiral Gravina ordered the observation squadron to place itself at the head of the combined fleet. The position of the two fleets made battle inevitable. Admiral Villeneuve wanted to reserve, in the event of defeat, the possibility of returning to Cadiz. At eight o'clock, he gave the signal to turn aft wind, all at once, and to form the line of battle, tacks to port, in reverse order. Around ten o'clock, the army ran to the new tacks. The breeze was light from the west and the swell very strong. The evolution had been badly executed, and our squadron, instead of being arranged in a single line, formed a sort of curve whose convexity was turned towards the east. A large number of vessels were to leeward of their posts; others were doubling up. "The combined Fleet," wrote Rear-Admiral Dumanoir after the battle, "thwarted by the swell and a very light breeze, found itself badly formed. Although very close, the rearguard appeared to be in a platoon. The centre had few vessels in the waters of each other, and the vanguard had only the five leading vessels in line."

As has been noted, Admiral Gravina, abandoning the position he occupied to windward of the fleet, had placed himself in line with the squadron he commanded. His ship, the *Prince des Asturies*, had become the rearguard of the combined fleet. Admiral Villeneuve, in ordering, at eight o'clock in the morning, to form the line of battle, tacks to starboard, had not given the observation squadron any particular order. His correspondence provides no clarification with regard to the maneuver carried out by the Spanish admiral.²⁰⁷

Admiral Villeneuve relates it without adding any comment: "As soon as day broke, we read in his letter of November 5, 1805, we saw the enemy to the west in the number of thirty-three sails, at a distance of about two and a half leagues. Cape Trafalgar was also seen to the east-southeast at four leagues, I signaled the frigates to go and reconnoiter the enemy and the fleet to form the line of battle, starboard tack, natural order. Admiral Gravina, at the same time, gave the observation squadron the signal to place itself at the head of the combined fleet. "Some writers claim that Vice-Admiral Gravina, before taking up his post at the head of the line, had asked, by signal, Admiral Villeneuve for permission to maneuver independently. A very clear refusal would have been the response of the commander-in-chief of the combined army. We find no trace of this incident in the official documents. Now, signals of this importance, seen by an entire squadron, cannot be passed over in silence. This version, favorable to Admiral Gravina, was adopted by the Spaniards. We must be all the more surprised since Rear-Admiral Escano, Gravina's chief of staff, makes no allusion in his report to this exchange of signals, which he would not have failed to do if it had actually taken place. At eleven o'clock, Villeneuve gave the rearguard the signal "to hold the wind to enable it to cover the centre of the fleet which appeared to be the point on which the enemy seemed to want to direct its greatest efforts." Now, at this moment, it was the observation squadron, since we had taken the tack to port, which was acting as the rearguard. Admiral Gravina maintained the position he had taken.²⁰⁸

Thus, barely formed, the observation squadron disappeared, and, with it, a combination which could have had happy consequences.

The combined fleet was arranged in the following order: the *Neptuno*, the *Scipion*, the *Intrépide*, of eighty, captains Cayetano-Valdés, Bellanger, Infernet, the *Rayo* of one hundred, captain Enrique Macdonell, the *Formidable* of eighty, captain Letellier, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir Lepelley, the *Duguay-Trouin*, the *Mont-Blanc*, the *San-Francisco d'Asis*, of seventy-four, captains Touffet, Lavillegris, Luis Florès, the *San-Augustino* of eighty, captain Felipe Cayigal, the *Héros* of seventy-four, captain Poulain, the *Santissima-Trinidad* of one hundred and thirty, captain Uriarte, flying the flag of squadron leader Cisneros, the *Bucentaure* of eighty, Captain Magendie, carrying the flag of Admiral Villeneuve, the *Neptune* of eighty, Captain Maistrat, the *San-Leandro*, the *Redoutable*, the *San-Justo*, of seventy-four, Captains Lucas, Quevedo, Miguel Gaston, the *Indomptable* of eighty, Captain Hubert, the *Santa-Ana* of one hundred and twenty, Captain Gardoqui, carrying the flag of Lieutenant-General Alava, the *Fougueux*, the *Monarca*, the *Pluton*, of seventy-four, Captains Baudoin, Arquemosa, Cosmao-Kerjulien, the *Algésiras* of eighty, Captain Letourneur, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Magon, the *Bahama*, the *Aigle*, of seventy-one. Captains Galiano, Gourrège, the *Swiftsure* of eighty, Captain Villemadrin, the *Argonauta* of eighty, Captain Pareja, the *Montanez* of eighty, Captain Alcedo, the *Argonaute* of seventy-four, Captain Epron, the *Berwick* of eighty, Captain Camas, the *San-Juan-Nepomuceno*, the *San-Ildefonso*, of seventy-four, Captains Cosmes, d'Argas, the *Achille* of eighty, Captain Deniéport, and the *Prince des Asturies* of one hundred and ten, Captain Hore, carrying the flag of Lieutenant-General Gravina.²⁰⁹

Due to the weakness of the breeze, the English advanced with extreme slowness. Although they were covered with sails, their speed did not exceed three knots. They were arranged in two columns, running perpendicular to our line of battle. The northern one, led by Admiral Nelson, consisted of twelve vessels, namely: the *Victory* of one hundred guns, flying the flag of the commander-in-chief; the *Temeraire*; the *Neptune* of ninety-eight; the *Conqueror*; the *Leviathan*; the *Ajax*; the *Orion* of seventy-four; the *Agamemnon* of sixty-four; the *Minotaur*; the *Spartan* of seventy-four; the *Britannia* of one hundred, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Northesk; and the *Africa* of sixty-four. These vessels were commanded by Captains Hardy, Harvey, Fremantle, Pellew, Boyntun, Pilford, Codrington, Berry, Mansfield, Laforey, Bullen, and Digby. Vice-Admiral Collingwood commanded the second column, consisting of the following vessels: the *Royal Sovereign* of one hundred, a carrying his flag, the *Mars*, the *Belle-Isle* of seventy-four, the *Tonnant* of eighty, the *Bellerophon*, the *Collossus*, the *Achille* of seventy-four, the *Polyphemus* of sixty-four, the *Revenge*, the *Swiftsure*, the *Defence*, the *Thunderer*, the *Defiance* of seventy-four, the *Prince*, and the *Dreadnought* of ninety-eight. These vessels were commanded by Captains Rotheram, Duff, Hargood, Tyler, Cooke, Morris, King, Redmill, Moorsom, Rutherford, Hope, Stokham, Durham, Gindall, and John Conn.²¹⁰

The commander-in-chief of the English Fleet, at the head of the northern column, was steering on the *Bucentaure*. Vice-Admiral Collingwood, with the ships under his command, was heading on the *Santa Ana*, a Spanish three-decker flying the flag of Vice-Admiral Alava.

The Franco-Spanish fleet was, at eleven o'clock, about twenty miles south-south-west of Cadiz. This distance was to decrease further as we were advancing towards the north. We therefore had, in the event of defeat, a leeward port, easy to reach. Wishing to take away this advantage from us, Lord Nelson informed Admiral Collingwood that he intended to pass to leeward of the combined fleet. The proximity of land worried the commander of the British fleet from another point of view. The weather looked bad. The long swell from the west, the falling barometer announced a gale which could constitute a serious danger, even for victorious ships. Admiral Nelson ordered that the necessary measures be taken to anchor at the end of the day. Towards noon, the tricolour flag was unfurled from the mizzen-top of our ships, to repeated cries of "Long live the Emperor". The Spaniards hoisted the flag of Castile, below which they placed a wooden cross. The English hoisted the flag of St. George at the stern of their ships, and at the head of the mainmast and foremast the white-tailed yacht as a sign of recognition. It was at this moment, when all military arrangements seemed to be made, that Lord Nelson addressed to his fleet this signal, which has remained famous:²¹¹

"England expects that each will do his duty."

Admiral Villeneuve had given the order to begin firing as soon as the enemy was within range. A little after noon, the first shots were heard; they were fired by the *Fougueux* on the *Royal Sovereign*. This vessel, which was about three-quarters of a mile ahead of its column, seemed to be advancing alone on the combined fleet. Collingwood's vessel was steering astern of the *Santa Ana*, with the evident intention of passing behind this vessel. There was such disorder in this part of the fleet that nothing could oppose the execution of this design. The *Fougueux*, aft sailor of the Spanish three-decker, was to leeward of the line. As for the ships coming after the *Fougueux*, all were behind their posts. Encountering no obstacle, the *Royal Sovereign* ranged, as it would have done in an exercise, the stern of the *Santa Ana*, firing at this vessel its port guns loaded with double projectiles. The English ship sent its starboard broadside to the *Fougueux*, then, keeping to the wind, on port tack, it engaged, yard by yard, the Spanish three-decker. In this position, the *Royal Sovereign* received fire from the *San Leandro*, the *San Justo*, the *Indomptable* and the *Fougueux*. One might have thought that the English three-decker would be destroyed or forced to lower its flag. This was not the case; our shooting was so bad that the *Royal Sovereign* was able to wait, without suffering much, for the arrival of the *Belleisle*. The latter vessel, after passing behind the *Santa Ana* and sending her an enfilade broadside, attacked the *Indomptable*. The *Aigle*, the *Achille* and the *Neptuno* opened fire on the *Belleisle*.²¹²

Completely dismasted, the debris of her masts and sails hanging along the side and obstructing most of her portholes, this vessel found itself, for a moment, in a very critical situation. The *Polyphemus*, the *Defiance* and the *Swiftsure* freed her. The first attacked the *Neptuno*, the second the *Aigle* and the third the *Achille*. The *Pluton* fought the *Mars* which had penetrated our line after the *Belleisle*. The commander of the *Mars* was killed. Captain Cosmao was preparing to board this vessel when the arrival of several English vessels separated him from his adversary. The vessels of the southern column did not all follow the route cleared by Admiral Collingwood. Some of them cut our line between the *Achille* and the *San Ildefonso*; others, coming on the starboard side, headed for the tail of the line in order to overtake the last ships from below the wind and put them between two fires. The column, at the head of which Admiral Nelson had placed himself, was moving more slowly than Collingwood's ships. The *Royal Sovereign* had been engaged with the *Santa Ana* for some time already, when the *Victory* came within range of our guns. At twenty minutes past twelve, the centre of our army and some ships of the vanguard opened fire on the English three-decker. The *Victory* was heading for the rear of the *Bucentaure*. No more than the *Royal Sovereign*, the ship of the commander-in-chief of the English fleet, was to find any resistance to cut our line. If this had been regularly formed, the *Neptune*, the *San-Leandro*, the *Redoutable*, the *San-Justo* and the *Indomptable*, sailor of the front of the *Santa-Ana*, would have been ranged in the waters of the *Bucentaure*.²¹³

Now, of these five vessels, intended to connect Villeneuve's vessel to the three-decker *Santa Ana*, behind which the *Royal Sovereign* had passed, the *Neptuno*, the *San Leandro*, the *San Justo* and the *Indomptable* were to leeward of their positions. The last three were not only to leeward but behind the position they should have occupied. The *Indomptable* barely passed the beam of the *Santa Ana*, of which she was the forward sailor. Thus, the greatest gap in our line of battle was in the centre of the fleet, and it was to this point that the *Victory* was heading. Captain Lucas of the *Redoutable*, realizing the dangers to which the commander-in-chief's ship was exposed, made sail. He approached the *Bucentaure*, but he could not keep close enough to that ship to close the passage. The breeze had dropped; the *Victory*, although covered with sails, advanced slowly. If the French squadron had had good gunners, the English ship would have been quickly rendered unable to continue its course, but our fire was so bad that it reached us without having suffered any serious damage. The topgallant mast cut, the rudder wheel broken, sails torn, such were its damages; its losses in men amounted to twenty killed and thirty wounded.

Nelson's ship passed through the line, drawing so close astern of the *Bucèntaure* that her yards, according to Captain Magendie's expression, "crossed over the quarterdeck of the French vessel." The fire from the three batteries of the *Victory*, whose guns were loaded with double projectiles, swept the *Bucentaure* along its entire length. The English three-decker continued on its way.²¹⁴

He had, at this moment, the *Redoutable* by the starboard davit, and, in front of him, the *Neptuno*, aft sailor of the *Bucentaure*. The *Neptuno*, as we have seen above, had fallen to leeward of his post. Captain Hardy, of the *Victory*, came to starboard, and, either voluntarily, or because he had not realized the distance which separated him from the *Redoutable*, he boarded this vessel. A very lively fight began between the English three-decker and the French seventy-four. The *Temeraire*, the *Neptune*, the *Leviathan*, the *Conqueror* crossed our line behind the *Victory*. These vessels surrounded the *Bucentaure* and her leading sailor, the *Santissima-Trinidad*, a Spanish three-decker which flew the flag of the squadron leader Cisneros. We have indicated the leeward position of the *Neptuno*, the *San-Justo*, the *San-Leandro* and the *Indomptable*, that is to say, the vessels which, with the *Redoutable*, should have been between the *Bucentaure* and the *Santa-Ana*. The captains of these vessels, probably assuming that they would not be able to rise sufficiently to windward to support the centre of the fleet, to which they belonged, took the starboard tack and headed towards the rearguard.

The Franco-Spanish army found itself cut in two. In the north, from the leader, the *Neptuno*, to the *Redoutable*, there were thirteen vessels; then, after a space of more than a mile, came the three-decker *Santa Ana*, behind which there were nineteen vessels. Admiral Nelson's column was able to focus all its efforts on three vessels, the *Bucentaure*, the *Santissima-Trinidad* and the *Redoutable*. Captain Lucas fought vigorously against the powerful adversary that circumstances had given him.²¹⁵

The two ships were side by side. The French sailors were directing, through the gunports of the *Victory*, a very heavy fusillade on the men who were operating the guns. From the tops of the *Redoutable*, a very lively fire of musketry was made; finally grenades were thrown on the deck of the English ship. Nelson, dressed in a uniform, covered in decorations, was walking, on the quarterdeck of the *Victory*, with his flag captain. A bullet, fired from the mizzen top of the *Redoutable*, struck him in the left shoulder. The projectile, after having crossed the epaulette and ploughed the chest, lodged in the spine. "I hope, my lord," cried his flag captain, rushing to his side, "that you are not seriously injured. It is all over for me, Hardy," replied the admiral, "they have finally succeeded, I have a broken spine." Nelson was carried to the false deck. The doctors could not delude themselves as to the seriousness of his wound; the admiral was mortally wounded.

Captain Lucas, learning that the *Victory*'s deck seemed abandoned, brought up the boarding divisions.

Our sailors, encountering great difficulty in getting on board the English vessel, the order was given to lower the main yard. Midshipman Yon and four sailors had already jumped on board the *Victory* and the crew was preparing to follow them when the *Temeraire* appeared. This vessel, after having cannonaded the *Bucentaure* for some time, had headed towards the *Victory*. Arranging the rear of the *Redoutable*, he sent her, within pistol range, a broadside of grapeshot. Two hundred men fell dead or wounded. The *Temeraire*, extending the French vessel to leeward, established herself by her starboard davit.²¹⁶

With heroic tenacity in the fight, Captain Lucas sent the rest of his brave crew back to the batteries. If he had to despair of victory, he would not surrender his ship except at the last minute. The *Victory* and the *Redoutable*, drifting, approached the *Temeraire*, whose bowsprit was caught in the main shrouds of the French ship. As if these two three-deckers had not been enough to reduce a ship of seventy-four guns, the *Neptune* of one hundred guns took up position astern of the *Redoutable* and sent her broadsides in enfilade. At one hour fifty-five minutes, dismasted, sinking with water, with five hundred and twenty-two men out of action, out of six hundred and forty-five of which her crew was composed, the *Redoutable* lowered her flag. Seven officers were killed and six wounded. There were, on board the *Redoutable*, eleven midshipmen; six were killed and five seriously wounded. The group, formed by the *Victory*, the *Redoutable* and the *Temeraire*, fell, while drifting towards the rear guard, on the *Fougueux*. This vessel had had several engagements with vessels belonging to Collinwood's column; she had fought valiantly until then, but, completely disarmed, having lost many men, she could not oppose a long resistance to the enterprises of the enemy. Nevertheless, Captain Baudoin called his boarding divisions and was preparing to launch them on board the English ship when he fell mortally wounded. Shortly afterwards, his second in command, Frigate Captain Bazin, was killed. A detachment from the *Temeraire* jumped on board the *Fougueux* and took control of this vessel. The *Fougueux* had more than four hundred men out of action.²¹⁷

During the course of the events that we have just reported, the action, at the rearguard, had become general; but, on this point, as in the center of the fleet, fortune was against our arms. The *Monarca*, cannonaded by the *Belleisle* then by the *Mars*, had had the *Bellerophon* for adversary. After a very lively engagement, which lasted until two o'clock, the Spanish ship lowered its flag. The *Santa-Ana*, carrying the flag of Vice-Admiral Alava, fought with the greatest energy against the *Royal-Sovereign*. Unfortunately, the Spanish three-decker had received, at the beginning of the action, numerous broadsides from the ships that passed behind it. At last, for some time, the *Belleisle* had come to the assistance of the *Royal Sovereign*. A little after two o'clock, the *Santa Ana*, dismasted of all her masts, lowered her flag; this vessel had ninety-seven dead, including five officers, and one hundred and forty-one wounded. Admiral Alava and four officers were among the latter. The *Royal Sovereign* had forty-seven dead and ninety-four wounded. The mainmast and mizzenmast of this vessel had been shot away and the foremast was on the point of falling. The eighty-ship *Argonauta*, the seventy-four ships *San Ildefonso* and *San Juan Nepomuceno* suffered the same fate as the *Monarca*, the *Bahama* and the *Santa Ana*.

As the day wore on, the situation became more difficult for the allies. The enemy ships, which the surrender of a French or Spanish ship left without opponents, came to the aid of those of their companions who were engaged. The greatest disorder reigned in the rear guard. In the midst of the smoke, the combatants ceased to see each other.²¹⁸

When a break in the weather occurred, each of them was surprised to find themselves in the presence of a new antagonist. At three thirty minutes past three, the *Aigle*, dismasted of all its masts, sinking with low water, with two thirds of its crew out of action, lowered its flag. The second of the ship, frigate captain Tempie had been killed and captain Gourrège seriously wounded (see the note). The *Berwick* had, as adversaries, the *Defence* then the *Achille*. Captain Camas and his second, frigate captain Guichard, were killed. The *Berwick*, with two hundred and fifty men out of action, lowered its flag. The *Algésiras* had already fought several enemy ships when it was boarded by the *Tonnant*. The latter engaged his main shrouds in the bowsprit of the French ship. The *Algésiras* receiving, in this position, broadsides to which it could only respond with its forward guns, Rear-Admiral Magon ordered an attempt to board; he intended to lead the crew onto the English ship himself. Wounded in the right arm and thigh, he did not leave his post; a bullet, which hit him in the chest, knocked him dead on the deck. A heavy fire, directed at the French ship by several enemy ships, did not allow the admiral's plan to be followed up. The foremast, the mainmast and the mizzenmast were successively shot down. Flag Captain Letourneur and his second having been wounded, command passed into the hands of the ship's lieutenant de La Bretonnière. Dismasted of all its masts, with two hundred and sixteen men out of action, riddled in all its parts, the *Algésiras* lowered its flag.

1. Captain Gourrège died a few days later of his wounds.²¹⁹

The *Swiftsure* was attacked by the *Revenge* and the *Colossus*. The French vessel was ardently supporting this unequal fight when the *Bellerophon* came to take up position behind him. The *Swiftsure* received broadsides which ravaged his batteries, killing men and dismounting guns. Dismasted of his foremast and mizzenmast, with two hundred and fifty men out of action and five feet of water in the hold, the *Swiftsure* was forced to surrender.

Shortly after the beginning of the action the *Achille* was surrounded; the *Polyphemus*, the *Defiance* and the *Swiftsure* joined together to crush him. At half-past two o'clock, the captain and several officers were killed; Ensign Cauchard took command of the *Achille*. About three o'clock, the *Prince* of a hundred guns came to join the attackers. The French ship already had nearly five hundred men out of action when an explosion, which occurred in the foremast, brought about a fire whose progress it was impossible to stop. A large number of men threw themselves into the sea, clinging to debris. The *Prince*, the *Swiftsure* and the cutters *Pickle* and *Entreprenant* sent their boats to pick them up. The *Montanez*, downwind at the moment when the battle began, had remained almost completely uninvolved in the action, the *Argonaute*, after having fought the *Bellerophon*, had fallen to leeward of the line. The *San-Leandro* and the *Indomptable* were downwind and at too great a distance to take an active part in the combat. It will be remembered that these two vessels belonged, together with the *Neptune* and the *San-Justo*, to the centre of the fleet. Far from their posts, at the moment when the *Victory* had cut the line on the rear of the *Bucentaure*, these four vessels had headed towards the rear guard.²²⁰

The *Prince of Asturias*, carrying the flag of Admiral Gravina, had fought successively the *Dreadnought*, the *Defence*, the *Defiance* and the *Prince*. The position of the Spanish ship had become very critical, when it was rescued by the *Pluton*, the *Neptune* and the *San-Justo*. The *Pluton*, after having been separated from its first adversary, the *Mars*, had fought several enemy ships, near which it had found itself, before going to the aid of the *Prince des Asturies*.

The mode of attack, adopted by the enemy, had left, outside the battlefield, our first ten ships. These, at three o'clock in the afternoon, had done nothing except to send, at the beginning of the action, a few cannonballs to Admiral Nelson's column and to the *Africa*. This sixty-four-man ship, which had separated from its 2nd army during the night, had not feared, in order to rally it promptly, to pass to windward of our line, within cannon range. We had not succeeded in disabling it and it had come to join the ships which were fighting the *Santissima-Trinidad*. At half past twelve, Admiral Villeneuve had made the following signal: "The naval fleet, fighting to windward and leeward, orders to the ships which, by their present position, are not fighting, - to take any which will bring them back to fire on the 14th as quickly as possible." This signal was not followed by any movement of the vanguard. "At the beginning of the combat," wrote Admiral Dumanoir, "the northern column headed towards the vanguard, which engaged with it for forty minutes and then fought a ship which, coming from the north, was heading to windward to join its army."²²¹

As soon as I saw no more enemies abeam the vanguard, I made a signal (article five of the signals under sail by a single flag) to the ships that had no enemies abeam to proceed promptly to fire. The sea was rough, the wind very light and almost calm; the ships were barely steering. No ship executed the signal." If the vanguard was unable to move, why did Admiral Dumanoir order it to proceed to fire. If, on the contrary, nothing opposed the execution of this order, it is difficult to understand that the *Formidable* did not begin the movement, thus setting an example that would have been followed.

At one fifty minutes past one, Admiral Villeneuve gave the signal to the vanguard "to go to fire," then "to turn all at once." The breeze was dropping, while the westerly swell remained very strong. The prescribed course could not be executed quickly. It was nearly three o'clock when the ten vessels preceding the *Santissima-Trinidad* had taken tack on the other side. The *Formidable*, which carried the flag of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, sailed to windward of the army, followed by the *Duguay-Trouin*, the *Mont-Blanc*, the *Scipion* and the *Neptuno*. Despite the special signals sent to them by the commander of the vanguard, five vessels, the *Rayo*, the *San-Francisco d'Asis*, the *San-Augustino*, the *Héros* and the *Intrépide* steered to leeward of the combined fleet. Several English vessels, which had hardly fought, came to meet these latter vessels. They were the *Britannia* of a hundred guns, the *Ajax* and the *Orion*, of seventy-four, and the *Agamemnon* of sixty-four. The *Rayo* and the *San Francisco d'Asis* exchanged, at a great distance, a few cannonballs with the *Britannia* and they headed towards the rearguard.²²²

The *San-Augustino*, after having been cannonaded by several English ships, was taken, when boarded, by the *Leviathan*. The *Héros* passed, at a short distance, several enemy ships, with which it exchanged cannonballs, but it did not stop to lend them the beam. The *Héros* lost its commander, Captain Poulain. The *Intrepid*, the last of the five ships that had sailed downwind of the army, set course for the *Bucentaure*. The capture of the *San-Augustino*, the removal of the *Héros*, the *Rayo* and the *San-Francisco d'Asis* did not divert the brave Captain Infernet from his plan. The *Africa* and the *Orion* were the first ships he encountered. The *Intrepid* fought them with the greatest vigor, but soon the *Ajax*, the *Conqueror* and the *Agamemnon* came to attack him. The *Neptuno*, commanded by one of the most distinguished officers of the Spanish navy, had followed Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. This ship showed great indecision in its maneuver; one might have thought that Captain Valdès regretted not having accompanied the ships that had left to leeward of the line. In any case, the *Neptuno*, remaining behind, was cut off by the *Spartan* and the *Minotaur*. A very lively fight ensued between the Spanish ship and the two English ships.

The slowness of the vanguard had delivered the *Bucentaure* and the *Santissima-Trinidad* to Nelson's column. The *Bucentaure*, without a mast, having most of its guns dismounted, responded only weakly to the fire of its adversaries. Two hundred and nine men were out of action; Commander Magendie and Lieutenant Daudignon, his second, were among the wounded.²²³

Admiral Villeneuve, who no longer had any hope of being rescued, wanted to raise his flag on one of the ships of the vanguard. "The *Bucentaure*," he said, "has fulfilled its task, mine is not yet finished." But it was in vain that they looked for a boat; all were broken. They hailed the *Santissima-Trinidad* to ask for a boat, but this ship, probably not hearing, in the midst of the noise of the battle, the question that was addressed to it, did not answer. The unfortunate admiral, bowing his head before fate, had the flag of the *Bucentaure* lowered. A small boat from the *Conqueror*, manned by four men and commanded by a marine infantry captain, came to pick up Admiral Villeneuve and took him aboard the *Mars*. Shortly afterwards, the *Santissima-Trinidad*, which had been engaged with several enemy ships since the beginning of the action, had to give way to numbers. This ship had fought heroically. Rear-Admiral Cisneros, her flag captain and several officers were among the wounded.

Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, with the *Formidable*, the *Scipion*, the *Mont-Blanc* and the *Duguay-Trouin*, extended the line, to windward, at a short distance, exchanging cannonballs with the ships within range of which he passed. Arriving abeam of the *Bucentaure* and the *Santissima-Trinidad*, he saw that these two ships were moored. Several English ships surrounded them. Rear Admiral Dumanoir continued to run south. Arriving abreast of the *Santa Ana*, he gave the order to Captain Letellier to let the enemy bear down. But already the ships he was leading had suffered.²²⁴

The *Formidable* had sixty-five men out of action; its rigging was chopped up, the port shrouds and backstays cut. In these conditions, the prescribed maneuver was to lead to the fall of the mast. Admiral Dumanoir, yielding to the observations made to him by his flag captain, continued his route under small sails. "Then more than ever," he wrote, "I felt how the non-execution of the order to tack by the five ships of the vanguard which had let us arrive, would be fatal to our weapons. If I had had ten ships with me, however desperate our position, I could have gone to the battlefield, fought the enemy to the bitter end, three of whom were dismasted, and it was perhaps reserved for me to make this day glorious for the combined army; but by not carrying out the orders indicated, I remained isolated with four ships..... To have reached the enemy at that moment would have been, he said further, a desperate move which would only have resulted in increasing the number of our losses and adding to the enemy's advantage, to which, by the dilapidated state of my division, I could not have caused great damage." In the middle of the rearguard, the *Achille* could be seen on fire; French and Spanish ships, almost all dismasted, no longer had their flags. Several enemy ships, without any apparent damage, formed in line of battle, to windward of the captured ships, ready to repel the attack of Admiral Dumanoir. A group of vessels, among which the Prince of Asturias could be distinguished, began its retreat.

Lieutenant General Gravina had become, since the capture of the *Bucentaure*, the commander-in-chief of the combined fleet.²²⁵

At four forty-five minutes, the *Prince des Asturies*, which he was riding, let go, having at the masthead the rallying signal. This ship had fought very well. Among the wounded were Lieutenant General Gravina, his chief of staff, Rear Admiral Escano, and several officers. Taken in tow by the frigate *Themis*, the Spanish three-decker headed for Cadiz, followed by the *Neptune*, *Pluton*, *Héros*, *Argonaute*, *Indomptable*, *Rayo*, *San-Francisco d'Asis*, *San-Justo*, *Montanez* and *San-Leandro*. It was then five o'clock. At this moment, the *Neptuno*, after a glorious fight against the *Spartan* and the *Minotaur*, was forced to surrender. Shortly afterwards, the *Intrepid*, exhausted by the fight it had sustained against five English ships, lowered its flag. Dismasted, sinking, with three hundred and six men out of action, its guns dismantled, the *Intrepid* could no longer respond to the fire of its adversaries. It was difficult to surpass the courage displayed by Captain Infernet, his staff and his brave crew; the *Intrepid* had shown itself to be the worthy emulator of the *Redoutable* (1). After the surrender of this heroic ship, silence fell on the battlefield. Seventeen ships, eight French and nine Spanish, remained in the hands of the enemy.

1. The *Intrepid* was the last to surrender. It had been more than twenty minutes since the firing had ceased on the whole line when he stopped his. He was as low as a pontoon, sinking low; out of six hundred and seventy men, three hundred and six were out of action. Of this number, only eighty were counted the next day wounded; the other two hundred and twenty-six were therefore killed or succumbed to their wounds during the night. The losses of the staff were: the frigate captain, the first lieutenant and the first ensign who succumbed to their wounds, and the second lieutenant who was wounded in both legs. There were also, among the dead, several officers of the troops. There were also, among the dead, several officers of the troops. However, it was necessary to do violence to Commander Infernet who did not want to surrender his ship and who did not cease to cry out, with tears in his eyes: "Ah! what will the Emperor say! I who had assured him that I could still sustain ten battles." (Letter from ship captain Gicquel des Touches, addressed, March 10, 1847, to the director of maritime annals. Ship captain Gicquel des Touches was an ensign on the *Intrépide*, at the battle of Trafalgar.)²²⁶

Eleven ships were retreating to Cadiz; four under Dumanoir, separated from Gravina by the British fleet, were moving away with their tacks to starboard. The fire that was devouring the *Achille* illuminated this scene of disaster. Shortly afterwards, this ship blew up, taking with it into the abyss part of its crew; Ensign Cauchard, who had, at that moment, the honor of commanding it, was among the victims. This sinister event was the last act of this maritime drama. It was then half past five. An hour before, after a slow and painful agony, the leader of the victorious fleet, Nelson, expired in the false deck of the *Victory*. He died buried in his triumph.

III

The breeze, which blew from the west-southwest, and a strong swell from the west pushed the ships towards the land. The rocks of Cape Trafalgar were about eight miles away, to leeward. Of the seventeen vessels taken by the English, nine still had some remains of masts, eight were as low as pontoons.²²⁷

The English fleet had, as we have seen above, received from Nelson the order to be ready to anchor. The admiral, on his deathbed, had addressed to the officers of his staff the most pressing recommendations on this subject. The captain of the *Victory* had made known to Admiral Collingwood the plans of the leader who the British fleet had just lost. Admiral Collingwood was very surprised that Nelson had thought of dropping anchor. This measure, which, he told Captain Hardy, he would never have thought of, seemed to him absolutely inopportune. If the English gave up anchoring, they should hasten to reach the open sea. At six o'clock in the evening, Vice-Admiral Collingwood hoisted his flag on the *Euryalus*. This frigate took the *Royal Sovereign* in tow. The winds were west-south-west. If they had blown strongly from that direction, the captured ships and the most badly-treated English vessels, such as *Royal Sovereign*, *Bellersle*, *Temeraire*, *Colossus*, *Mars*, *Tonnant*, *Africa* and *Bellerophon*, would inevitably have been thrown ashore. Few of the men who were on them would have escaped death. The breeze veered to the south-west about midnight, and it was only then that it became very strong. The English, having succeeded in taking the tacks to port, were able to get away.

On the 22nd, at daybreak, the *Fougueux*, with thirty Englishmen on board, threw herself ashore near the Santi-Petri tower. Only one hundred and twenty men managed to reach land. The *Bucentaure*, which the *Conqueror* had tried in vain to tow, anchored on the night of October 21, near the castle of San Sebastian. The English crew surrendered; the French, after setting up a makeshift mast, set sail for Cadiz.²²⁸

The *Bucentaure*, on entering, was lost on a rocky bank called the Puercos; the crew was picked up by the boats of the *Thémis* and the *Indomptable*. On the 22nd, at daybreak, the *Algésiras*, separated from the English fleet, was near Cape Trafalgar, towards which the wind and the sea were pushing it rapidly. The situation of this vessel, which was completely dismasted, was very critical. Fifty English, detached from the *Tonnant*, were on board the *Algésiras*; the officer who commanded them requested the assistance of the French. These, numbering two hundred and seventy, had been relegated to the hold. The most senior officer of the *Algeciras*, Lieutenant La Bretonniere, refused to come to the aid of the English. He declared that, as a result of the abandonment in which the ship had been left, the crew was free from any engagement. He demanded the pure and simple surrender of the *Algeciras*. The French, he added, although unarmed, were determined to attack the English if they would not acquiesce to this demand. He also offered to send the officer of the *Tonnant* back, him and his men, to the British fleet, as soon as the ship was safe. These conditions having been accepted, the French and English set to work with ardour. A makeshift mast was built. Dragging itself painfully along the coast, threatened several times with being lost, the *Algeciras* succeeded in entering Cadiz. The English, as had been agreed, were handed over to Admiral Collingwood. On the 22nd, at nightfall, the *Redoutable* having made distress signals, the *Swiftsure*, which was towing her, sent her boats. At seven o'clock, the *Redoutable* sank. Two hundred men were still on board this vessel; fifty were picked up from the wreckage.²²⁹

The officers of the French and Spanish ships that had retreated to Cadiz had met in council. They had decided that the ships, in a state to put to sea, would be ready to set sail. These ships were to set sail as soon as the winds blew from a direction allowing them to leave and re-enter Cadiz. On the 23rd, *Pluton*, *Neptune*, *San-Francisco d'Asis*, *Indomptable*, *Rayo*, five frigates and two brigs went out to sea. Two English ships, one towing the *Neptuno* and the other the *Santa-Ana*, had been driven towards land by the bad weather. As our ships approached, they abandoned their prizes. On the orders of Admiral Collingwood, ten ships, formed in line of battle, covered the ships that still remained in the hands of the English. The allies could not compromise themselves in such an unequal struggle. They had, moreover, obtained an important advantage by freeing the *Neptuno* and the *Santa-Ana*. Consequently, the five ships resumed the route to Cadiz, where the *Neptuno* and the *Santa-Ana*, towed by the frigates, had preceded them. The *Rayo*, having missed the entrance to Cadiz, anchored outside the bay. The *Aigle*, abandoned by the English, dropped anchor on the coast on the night of October 21; she arrived off Cadiz on the 25th. After having struck once, this ship was lost near the port of Santa-Maria. The *Santissima-Trinidad* was taking on water from all sides; men were constantly busy at the pumps. On the 24th, there was fourteen feet of water in the hold; the English decided to abandon this vessel.²³⁰

Boats were sent to pick up the crew, but the evacuation not having been done with sufficient promptness, the *Santissima-Trinidad* sank on the 25th, at daybreak, still having a large number of wounded on board. On October 28, the *Monarca* and the *Berwick* were lost near San-Lucar. The *Rayo* of one hundred guns, which had not managed, after the sortie of October 23, to return to Cadiz, had dropped anchor on the coast. Following violent rolling, the mast, already very damaged, had come down. Attacked, the next day, by the *Leviathan* and the *Donegal*, the *Rayo* lowered its flag. Two days later, he was lost at the mouth of the Guadalquivir. Of the one hundred and seven men, including officers, who made up the prize crew, twenty-five drowned. On October 30, the *Intrepid*, the *San-Augustino*, the *Argonaute*, driven by the wind and the sea, approached the coast. Admiral Collingwood, despairing of bringing them back to sea, burned the *Intrepid* and the *San-Augustino* and sank the *Argonaute*, which was taking on a lot of water.

If the violence of the wind had done a lot of harm to the English, taking away the greater part of their prizes, on the other hand, the bad weather had been, for us, the cause of new misfortunes. The *San-Francisco-d'Asis*, had been lost on the rocks which border the fort Sainte-Catherine. Finally, the *Indomptable* had been thrown ashore near Rota. There were, on board this vessel, about twelve hundred men, five hundred of whom came from the *Bucentaure*. One hundred and seventy-eight and two officers reached the land; the rest perished. Captain Hubert was among the victims. In short, of the eight French vessels taken on October 21, only the *Swiftsure* remained in the hands of the enemy.²³¹

The *Fougueux* and the *Berwick* had been cast ashore; the *Bucentaure* and the *Aigle* had been lost while entering Cadiz. The English had sunk the *Redoutable* and delivered the *Intrépide* to the flames. Finally the *Algésiras* was safe at Cadiz. Of the ten Spanish vessels, including the *Rayo*, which had been captured, seven were no longer in the possession of the English. The *Argonauta* and the *Santissima Trinidad* had been sunk and the *San-Augustino* burned. The *Rayo* and the *Monarca* had been cast ashore and the *Neptuno* as well as the *Santa-Ana* had been recaptured by the allies. Consequently, the British squadron had no other trophy than the *Swiftsure*, *San Juan Nepomuceno*, *San Ildefonso* and *Bahama*. These ships were taken to Gibraltar. One of them, *Bahama*, sank in the bay. Of the other three, only one, the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, could be used.

The English suffered four hundred and two killed and eleven hundred and thirty-nine wounded. The Spanish losses amounted to one thousand and twenty-two dead and thirteen hundred and eighty-three wounded. Five French ships, the *Neptune*, the *Héros*, the *Argonaute*, the *Pluton* and the *Indomptable* had anchored at Cadiz after the battle. The *Neptune* had thirteen killed and thirty-seven wounded, the *Héros* eleven killed and twenty-three wounded, the *Argonaute* forty-four killed and one hundred and eighteen wounded and the *Pluton*, commanded by the brave Cosmao, fifty-nine killed and one hundred and twenty-eight wounded. The *Indomptable*, the fifth ship to return with Gravina, having been lost with the greater part of her crew, the number of men hit by enemy fire remained unknown. The total losses of the French fleet could not be established with exactitude.²³²

According to the researches made at Cadiz, it was supposed that the number of wounded reached eleven hundred and fifty-five and that of killed and drowned three thousand three hundred and seventy-three.

IV

In the encounter of October 21, 1805, known in history as the Battle of Trafalgar, the English fought us, on all points, with superior forces. For several hours, only twenty-three vessels, out of the thirty-three of which the combined fleet was composed, were engaged. Could one, by some clever combination or by orders given at the right time, if not thwart the plans of the English admiral, at least lessen their scope? It seems that nothing opposed the first ten vessels from taking part in the combat. In this hypothesis, to whom should we attribute the inaction of our vanguard? At ten minutes past twelve, the *Royal Sovereign* crossed the line behind the *Santa Ana*. Shortly afterwards, the *Bucentaure* and the *Santissima Trinidad* opened fire on the *Victory*. At this moment, it was impossible to mistake the mode of attack adopted by the enemy. At half past twelve, at the moment when the *Victory* was passing astern of the *Bucentaure*, Admiral Villeneuve ordered every vessel which was not engaged to fire. It must be assumed that Rear-Admiral Dumanoir Lepelley did not consider this signal as being addressed to the ships he commanded, since he made no movement.²³³

By not ordering the vanguard, by a new signal, to immediately come to the fire, Admiral Villeneuve seemed to approve of his lieutenant's conduct. The latter, making it known, at one o'clock, that the vanguard had no enemies to fight, showed by that very fact that he did not want to take the initiative of any measure intended to modify the formation of the fleet. Instead of acting, he asked for orders. Vice-Admiral Villeneuve did not give him any, or rather he gave them too late. It was fifty minutes past one when the *Bucentaure* signaled the vanguard to come to the fire and to turn at the same time. At this point, the centre no longer offered any serious resistance to the enemy. It was therefore too late. Now, it was up to the commander-in-chief, as long as he could make signals, to direct the movements of the fleet. We are therefore entitled to ask Admiral Villeneuve to account for the inaction of the ten ships which preceded the *Santissima-Trinidad*. This is not to say that Admiral Dumanoir's conduct should be approved. On the contrary, it is appropriate to seek the share of responsibility which falls to him. How, in fact, can we understand that the commander of the vanguard, while the fate of the battle was being decided, waited so long for orders whose indispensable necessity he recognised since he himself requested them? Finally, should he not remember that Villeneuve, in instructions dated December 20, 1804, had said: "that any captain who was not at the firing line would not be at his post, and that the signal which would remind him of his duty would be a stain on him." Now, he knew well that the vanguard was not at its post, since he was signaling that it had no enemies to fight.²³⁴

Rear-Admiral Dumanoir therefore committed a serious fault in not leading, on his own authority, the ships he commanded to the aid of the *Bucentaure*, as soon as this ship was surrounded. The calm alone, he said in one of his reports, prevented the vanguard from turning earlier than it did. Until the moment, he wrote in a second report, when the admiral signaled the vanguard to turn all at once, the calm had made it impossible to do so. This explanation seems difficult to accept. The fourteen ships following the *Royal-Sovereign* and the ten following the *Victory* found enough wind to reach the battlefield. The twelfth ship of the northern column, the *Africa*, which had separated from the English army during the night, was able to extend the entire vanguard to windward and join the ships that were fighting the *Santissima-Trinidad*. How could what was possible for the English not be possible for us?

It seems that fate attached itself to the movements of our vanguard. When it, after too long an inaction, went onto the battlefield, it was divided. By remaining compact, it could do something; separated, it offered itself, of its own accord, to the blows of the enemy. If Rear-Admiral Dumanoir had been followed by the entire vanguard, there is reason to believe that he would have let it bear on the ships that surrounded the *Bucentaure* and the *Santissima-Trinidad*. Ten ships, having barely fought, appearing on the battlefield, would probably not have changed the fate of the day, but, for sure, they would have inflicted serious losses on the enemy.²³⁵

It was in such an enterprise that we should have lost the *San-Augustino*, the *Neptuno* and the *Intrépide*. We know that these three vessels were taken separately, and while fighting against superior forces. The last two covered themselves with glory, but it is regrettable that valiant officers, like Captains Valdès and Infernet, did not understand the necessity, for the ships of the vanguard, to remain united. Now, this result could only be obtained on condition of following Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. As for the *Héros*, the *Rayo* and the *San-Francisco d'Asis*, their conduct was all the more blameworthy because they did not fight. They headed for the rearguard, avoiding the ships they encountered. "It was with good reason," wrote the commander of the vanguard, "that I complained in my report that I had only been followed on the *Formidable* by three ships. The *Intrépide*, when tacking at the signal, collided with the *Mont-Blanc* and tore her foremast. She then let her come, as well as four other ships, running broadside to join the allied ships to leeward; but, as this ship was making very bad progress, she was soon joined by the enemy, and it was then that she made this fine defence, of which Captain Infernet has the right to boast. As for the *Neptuno*, Captain Valdès, he was leader of the fleet and was to windward. After the tack, he kept to windward, let it come, came back to windward and showed the greatest indecision in his maneuver. He then decided, but very late, to follow me. I had already passed the admiral when he took my waters. Until that moment, he had always kept well to windward, never having approached the enemy as much as we did." Reduced to four ships, Admiral Dumanoir, as we have seen, did not dare to let the enemy come.²³⁶

The attitude of the commander of the vanguard was judged severely in Paris. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, after his return to France, seeing himself disgraced, asked for judges. A few years passed without this satisfaction being granted to him. However, on September 13, 1809 that is to say, nearly four years after the battle of Trafalgar, the government decided to submit the examination of his conduct to a board of inquiry. This council, composed of Vice-Admirals Bougainville, Senator, Rosily and Thevenard and of M. de Fleurieu, Senator, former ship captain, had the mission of resolving the following four questions: "Did Rear-Admiral Dumanoir maneuver in accordance with the signals and the impulse of duty and honor? Did Rear-Admiral Dumanoir do everything he could to clear the center of the army and particularly the flagship? Did Rear-Admiral Dumanoir attack the enemy hand-to-hand, and did he get close enough to the fire to take part in the combat as closely as he could have? Did Rear-Admiral Dumanoir not leave the combat when he could fight? "The board of inquiry decided unanimously: "1° That Rear Admiral Dumanoir had maneuvered in accordance with the signals and the impulse of duty and honor; 2° that he had done what the winds and circumstances allowed him to do to go to the aid of the commander in chief; 3° that he had fought, as closely as he could, the vessels he had encountered up to the center; 4° finally, that he had personally left the fight only forced by the damage of all kinds to his vessel and particularly by the impossibility of maneuvering in the state in which its masts were found."²³⁷

Two very important questions seem to have been forgotten by the minister. Should Rear-Admiral Dumanoir wait, to go to the aid of the center, for the signal made, at one fifty minutes, by Admiral Villeneuve? If, on the contrary, it was his duty to lead the vanguard to fire, as soon as the Bucentaure was surrounded, that is to say before one o'clock, could he allege that he had been unable to maneuver? These were the two points on which it would have been necessary to know not implicitly but in a precise manner the opinion of the council.

There are no documents establishing precisely the nature of the command that Admiral Gravina exercised when the combined fleet left Cadiz. In the correspondence exchanged with the minister, before putting to sea, Admiral Villeneuve does not mention the observation squadron. This appears, for the first time, in the report made after the battle of October 21. There is reason to believe that Admiral Gravina had the command in chief of the reserve squadron. Indeed, it is noted that this squadron stood on the right of the fleet on the 20th. It maintained this position in the evening of the same day, although the combined fleet, on the orders of Admiral Villeneuve, formed the line of battle with its tacks to starboard. Finally, on the 21st, at eight o'clock in the morning, she came to take up her post at the head of the line, but this was only after having received the order from Admiral Gravina. Admiral Decrès, when all the reports on the battle had reached him, wrote:²³⁸

"The observation squadron, commanded by Admiral Gravina, instead of going where events made it necessary, placed itself behind and rendered none of the circumstantial services to which it was particularly called. It made no movement, let itself be beaten and fled in detail." How could the minister have held this language, if he had not been convinced that Vice-Admiral Gravina exercised, in an independent manner, the command of the observation squadron. Finally, the board of inquiry, convened in September 1809, to examine the conduct of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, censured the conduct of Vice-Admiral Gravina. "The combined Fleet," noted the board of inquiry, "turning tack, all at once, the Gravina squadron must have been naturally to windward, and it would have maintained this position, if, without a signal from Admiral Villeneuve to the fleet of observation, it had not put itself in line on the signal made by Mr. Gravina." The Gravina squadron, which was the observation squadron, it is said elsewhere, "should have maintained its position to windward of the line, which covered its center, instead of moving to the rearguard to lengthen the line, without having received the signal." The board of inquiry would not have had an opinion to express on this point, if it had not been established that Admiral Gravina had a direct and personal action on the observation squadron. In this hypothesis, it is difficult to understand that this squadron did not remain to windward of the fleet. Why, on the other hand, having placed himself in the rearguard, did Vice-Admiral Gravina not, on seeing the English mode of attack taking shape, bring the observation squadron back to windward of the battle line? Finally, the signal given, at half-past eleven, to the rearguard to hold the wind, in order to be in a position to cover the centre of the fleet, showed that such was the opinion of Admiral Villeneuve.²³⁹

The major of the squadron, frigate captain de Prigny, said in his report: "At half past eleven, the winds still weak, the signal was given to the observation squadron (Gravina), which was then in the rearguard and which was arriving to take the waters of the line, to hold the wind to come and reinforce the center of the line against the attack of the enemy who was moving there in two columns as is said in the report of Admiral Villeneuve."

We see that just reproaches could be addressed to Admiral Gravina for his conduct during the day of October 21. The Emperor learned, in the midst of the triumphs of the immortal campaign of 1805, of the defeat suffered by the combined squadron. The battle of Trafalgar destroyed great projects; all hope of striking a decisive blow in England disappeared. Considerable expenditure, work pursued with obstinacy, became useless. If anything could console us for the disaster suffered by the French navy, it was the valour or, to speak more exactly, the relentlessness with which most of our vessels had fought. The crews had not despaired of victory. Unhappy since the beginning of the war, and it dated from 1793, they had shown themselves inaccessible to discouragement. After the heroic struggle, supported by the *Redoutable* and the *Intrépide*, one had to mention the glorious defense made by the *Bucentaure*, the *Algésiras*, the *Berwick*, the *Fougueux*, the *Aigle*, the *Swifture* and finally the unfortunate *Achille*.

The Court of London had had the skill to bring Austria and Russia to make war on us.²⁴⁰

The great army had raised the camp of Boulogne to enter Germany, but as long as the fleets of France, Holland and Spain remained intact, the project of descent remained like a threat suspended over the heads of the English. It was to be feared, on the other side of the strait, that our troops, after having imposed peace on Europe, would retake, on the shores facing Great Britain, the positions they had abandoned. A favorable circumstance occurring, the goal, pursued with so much effort, was achieved. The disaster suffered by the navies of France and Spain thwarted these calculations. The day of October 21 therefore represented, for England, more than a battle won. The tranquillity of this power seemed now assured, and it was only on the continent, that is to say, outside its own country, that it was called upon to take part in the struggle. England showed herself lavish in rewards to the fleet which had delivered her from the spectre of invasion. Spain, although she was far from having the same reasons for satisfaction, treated with extreme favour the squadron which had succumbed at Trafalgar. The courage displayed by some brilliant officers, the streams of blood shed that day, the struggle against the elements coming after the battle against men, had struck people's minds. Every officer present at the combat of October 21 was advanced one rank. The government granted, moreover, rewards to those who had distinguished themselves in a particular manner. In France, silence fell on the battle of Trafalgar. However, not all the combatants of this great day were forgotten.²⁴¹

Captains Lucas, of the *Redoutable*, Infernet, of the *Intrépide*, summoned to the Tuileries, were received by the Emperor who presented them, in the presence of a large staff, with the Commander's Cross of the Legion of Honor, a remarkable award at that time. The brave Captain Cosmao, of the *Pluton*, was named rear admiral.

The Battle of Trafalgar was to have a fatal outcome for the three admirals who commanded the fleets in chief. Nelson had lost his life during the fight. Vice-Admiral Gravina died of his wounds, shortly after his arrival in Cadiz. As for Admiral Villeneuve, the difficulties of the campaign, the continual setbacks he had encountered, the disaster suffered by the fleet he commanded, had thrown him into deep despair. Returning to France in the first days of April 1806, this brave and unfortunate admiral, whose greatest fault was to have accepted a role beyond his strength, committed suicide. Vice-Admiral Rosily had arrived at Cadiz on October 25. Having left Paris to take command of a large fleet, he found eight vessels, five French and three Spanish, which were not even in a condition to put to sea. The new commander-in-chief set his flag on the *Héros*. Rear-Admiral Louis, sent to Gibraltar a few days before the battle of October 21, to take on water and provisions, reappeared, on the 30th, off Cadiz, with the ships *Queen* of ninety-eight, *Canopus* of eighty, *Spencer* and *Tigre*, of seventy-four. Vice-Admiral Collingwood hoisted his flag on the *Queen* and resumed the blockade of Cadiz.²⁴²

V

Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, after having left the battlefield, on the evening of October 21, continued to sail on the starboard tack. The *Formidable*, the *Scipion*, the *Mont-Blanc* and the *Duguay-Trouin* had major damage to repair. These four vessels changed almost all their sails, as well as the yards and topmasts. The winds were favorable for returning to the Mediterranean, but warships had been sighted, at sunset, in the direction of the strait. Finally, Rear-Admiral Dumanoir knew that a division of six vessels, including two with three decks, detached from Nelson's fleet, a few days before the battle, had been sent to Gibraltar. He decided to sail north, reserving the right, depending on circumstances, to go to Rochefort, Lorient or Brest. The winds blew from the west with extreme violence, and the four vessels suffered greatly. The *Formidable*, which was taking on up to seven feet of water per hour, was on the point of sinking. The forecastle battery and two twenty-four-pounder cannons were thrown into the sea. The crew, who had not taken any rest since October 21, were exhausted. The situation of the other vessels, without being as critical, was far from satisfactory. All had twin masts, rigging in poor condition and were taking on a lot of water.²⁴³

Rear Admiral Dumanoir flattered himself with the hope of meeting the commander Allemand. The neutrals, when questioned, were unable to provide any information on the Rochefort division. On November 2, off Cape Finisterre, frigates were sighted that did not respond to the signals of the *Formidable*. Fearing that these ships were scouts for an enemy squadron, Rear Admiral Dumanoir ran, at nightfall, in the direction of land. The winds were between the west and northwest, blowing moderately. Rear Admiral Dumanoir intended to head for Rochefort, while the enemy, warned by the frigates we had seen, would probably go looking for him under Belle-Isle.

On the 3rd, eight sail were reported in the south-west; shortly after, four ships and four frigates were recognised. These vessels, which were under the command of Commodore Sir Richard Strachan, consisted of the *Caesar* of eighty, bearing the Commodore's guidon, *Namur*, *Hero* and *Courageux*, of seventy-four, the frigates *Bellona*, *Phoenix*, *Santa Margarita* and *Eolus*. Sir Richard Strachan had been detached, on the 29th of October, from the Canal squadron to pursue Rochefort's division. The situation in which our ships found themselves imposed on Rear-Admiral Dumanoir the obligation to avoid any engagement. The day passed without bringing about any change in the distance which separated us from the enemy. The night was clear, which rendered any change of course impossible. The next day, when day broke, the English had won us over and combat had become inevitable. The enemy was not obeying any orders.²⁴⁴

At eight o'clock in the morning, the *Santa-Margarita* and the *Phœnix* began to cannonade the *Scipion*, the rearguard of our line. These two frigates were marching in front of a group formed by two ships; then, at some distance, came a ship and two frigates. The fourth ship was behind and quite far from the latter. Around eleven o'clock, Rear-Admiral Dumanoir had the line of battle formed, the tacks to starboard. The French division was arranged in the following order: *Duguay-Trouin*, *Formidable*, *Mont-Blanc* and *Scipion*. Three English ships, the *Cæsar*, the *Hero* and the *Courageux* joined the two frigates and pressed very vigorously on the *Mont-Blanc* and the *Scipion*. At eleven forty-five minutes, the French division tacked the wind ahead by the counter-march to rescue the two engaged vessels. Admiral Dumanoir intended to take the starboard tack again, but the damage to the masts caused by the leader of our line, the *Duguay-Trouin*, did not allow him to do so. He continued this tack and reduced sail, so as not to leave the *Scipion* behind. The new route we were following made it quicker for the fourth English vessel, the *Namur*, to rally. It was then nothing more than an artillery battle, in which the enemy's fire immediately took a very great superiority over ours. A little after three o'clock, the *Formidable* had two hundred men out of action, nine feet of water in the hold and most of her guns dismounted. It was hardly if he answered, with a few shots, the violent fire directed against him. The flag was lowered. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, part of the staff, the officers and the midshipmen of the majority were among the wounded.²⁴⁵

The *Formidable* having thrown, a few days before, part of its artillery into the sea, had only sixty cannons. The *Scipion*, after having lost part of its masts, had fallen to leeward; fought by the *Courageux* and the frigates the *Bellona* and the *Phœnix*, surrendered. The *Scipion* had nine feet of water in the hold and two hundred men out of action. Captain Berrenger was wounded. The *Mont-Blanc* and the *Duguay-Trouin* then had to fight against the entire English division. Around four o'clock, these two vessels, unable to prolong their heroic resistance, lowered their flag. The *Mont-Blanc* had one hundred and eighty men hit by enemy fire and the *Duguay-Trouin* one hundred and fifty. The first of these vessels had eight feet of water in the hold and the second was as low as a pontoon. Captain Touffet, of the *Duguay-Trouin*, had been killed; frigate captain Boissard, lieutenants Lavenue, Guillet, Tocqueville, Çossé, belonging to the same vessel, were among the wounded. At the height of the action, lieutenant Guillet, who had had a bullet through his cheek, went back up on deck, after receiving a first dressing, and took command of the vessel, exercised at that moment by ensign Rigodit. The combat had barely ended when the masts, which were still standing on the four vessels, fell. The *Formidable* and the *Mont-Blanc* only retained their foremast without a yard. Had the breeze freshened, the *Formidable*, the *Mont-Blanc*, and the *Scipion* could not have been kept afloat. Commodore Sir John Strachan was more fortunate than Admiral Collingwood; favoured by very fine weather, he was able to bring his prizes to Plymouth. The fight of Cape Ortegal, as the affair of November 4th was called, must be considered as one of the episodes in the battle of Trafalgar.²⁴⁶

The board of inquiry, which had to decide on the maneuver of the vanguard, at the Battle of Trafalgar, was charged with examining the conduct of Rear-Admiral Dumanoir in the battle of Cape Ortegal. The board expressed the opinion that this general officer had been wrong: "1st In not having tacked, at seven thirty minutes in the morning; 2nd In having allowed himself to be chased and cannonaded, for more than four hours, by frigates, instead of having them attacked and fought, side by side, by the best sailing ships of his division; 3rd In having tacked only under fire from enemy ships, when they had already attacked the tail of the division. The council added that Rear-Admiral Dumanoir had shown too much indecision in his maneuver. The council considered that there was only praise to be given to the captains for the way in which they had fought. Rear-Admiral Dumanoir did not want to remain under the blame that resulted for him from the decision of the board of inquiry. Brought before a court martial at his request, he was acquitted. This council, presided over by Vice-Admiral Ganteaume, was composed of Vice-Admiral Allemand, Rear-Admirals Cosmao and Baudin and the ship captains Faye, Trullet, Violette and Martin. If Rear-Admiral Dumanoir, concerned to avoid any engagement, had not acted with the necessary firmness and decision, the same could not be said of his ships. It was difficult to display more obstinacy, more real courage than the captains, officers and crews of the ships *Formidable*, *Mont-Blanc*, *Scipion* and *Duguay-Trouin*.²⁴⁷

The morale of the men, who were fighting so heroically on November 4, after having witnessed the disaster of Trafalgar on October 21, had not suffered any harm. The enemy himself proclaimed the energy of the resistance. "The French," wrote Commodore Sir Richard Strachan, "fought admirably; when they surrendered, their ships were in such a state that they could no longer be maneuvered." Although Rear-Admiral Dumanoir's division had fought with extreme vigor, it had fallen entirely into the hands of the enemy. Had the English paid dearly for this complete triumph? They counted twenty-four killed and one hundred and eleven wounded on eight ships. Sir Richard Strachan's ships had their masts intact; ours were as close as pontoons. Thus, the war, which remained, for us, a very serious matter, had become a game for our adversaries (1). Rear-Admiral Dumanoir wrote to the minister: "After having related the unfortunate results of this day, the dearest duty which remains for me to fulfill, Monseigneur, is to report to your excellency, that I have only praise to give to the meritorious conduct of each captain, to the bravery of the staffs and the crews, but unfortunately, I have no reason to praise the skill of our gunners.

1. An army officer, Captain Gemähling, embarked on the *Duguay-Trouin*, wrote in a private letter: "Our unfortunate ship, completely disabled, taking on water, was crushed by the fire of two ships and frigates. It was no longer war as it should be understood, it was an abominable slaughter. Three-quarters of my company lying around me, my poor lieutenant Le Deyeux moaning a few steps away and so many others." ²⁴⁸

The disease and the first two battles had taken away the best from us, and the clumsiness of those who remained was, in large part, the cause of our last misfortune, although, moreover, the strength of the enemy was much superior to that of the division whose masts were twinned, as a result of the first battles." Whether we examine the battle of Trafalgar, or the battle of Cape Ortegal, we arrive at the same conclusions. The enemy's shooting was excellent and ours detestable; that is what we should have known in Paris. It was all very well to ask our captains for audacity, but before wanting fierce battles, we had to put our ships in a condition to deliver them.

Commodore Sir Richard Strachan was very surprised to learn that the ships he had captured came from Cadiz. He believed that fortune had put Rochefort's division in his path, which he had been sent to look for. This division was, on November 4, far from the coast of Spain. The ship captain Allemand had left Rochefort on August 16 with the one hundred and twenty *Majestueux*, which he commanded, the eighty ships *Magnanime*, *Jemmapes*, *Suffren*, *Lion*, three frigates and two brigs. On the same day, the English corvette *Ranger* fell into our hands. The French division anchored, on the night of the 17th, on the coast of Spain, a few miles from Vigo. After communicating with the land and receiving the instructions that Admiral Villeneuve had left for him, the captain Allemand set sail again. If he did not find the combined fleet at Ferrol, he was to go to the height of the Penmarcks. Admiral Villeneuve ordered him to go to Cadiz, if he suffered any damage or if he experienced too great annoyances during the course of his navigation.²⁴⁹

These orders had been given, while Villeneuve was counting on the arrival of the Rochefort squadron, in Vigo, towards the end of July. The captain Allemand, knowing that the Franco-Spanish army was no longer at Ferrol, headed for the Penmarck. Arriving at the latitude of the rendezvous, he stayed offshore in order to obtain information on the position of the allies and that of the enemy. Informed by neutrals that Admiral Villeneuve had headed south, captain Allemand set sail to join him. He learned, from the brig *Phæbus*, captured on September 11, that an English squadron, twenty-five to thirty ships strong, was standing in front of Cadiz, where the Franco-Spanish fleet was anchored. Under these conditions, rallying Admiral Villeneuve was an enterprise full of perils; captain Allemand, in agreement on this point with the captains of his division, did not want to attempt it. He established himself in cruise to the west of Cape Lizard. On the 26th, our lookouts reported a convoy, escorted by the sixty-man ship, *Calcutta*. This one, first cannonaded by the frigate *Armide*, was joined by the *Magnanime*. After an engagement of a quarter of an hour, the English ship lowered its flag; it had six killed and six wounded. The *Calcutta* was added to the division under the command of frigate captain Bérar. Captain Allemand headed for Vigo, where he intended to take on water and disembark his sick; having left for two months, he already had twelve hundred men on the staff. Having encountered contrary winds, captain Allemand went to Sainte-Croix de Tenerife. Arriving on November 3, the French division left the Canaries on the 16th, and anchored on the 24th in the harbor of the island of Aix, without having seen the enemy.²⁵⁰

This cruise took from the English, in addition to the ship *Calcutta*, a corvette, a brig, a cutter and forty-two merchant ships. The division of the captain Allemand, absent for one hundred and sixty-one days, had spent one hundred and forty-eight at sea. The number of prisoners it brought back amounted to eight hundred; finally the damage caused to the enemy was estimated at eight million francs. Captain Allemand was named rear-admiral.

A few special engagements took place during the year 1805. The *Ville-de-Milan* of forty, captain Reynaud, had left the Antilles on January 28, with very urgent dispatches for Europe. This frigate was, on February 16, at 28 degrees north latitude and 69 degrees west longitude. In the morning, a sail was reported; it was the *Cleopatra* of thirty-eight. This frigate made sail and headed towards the French ship. Captain Reynaud, who had very precise orders to avoid a fight even an advantageous one, so that no damage would delay his progress, continued his route under full sail. On the 17th, at daybreak, the *Cleopatra* had approached; at half past two, she sent her first cannonballs. The *Ville-de-Milan* held the wind and the action began; at five o'clock, the English frigate lowered its flag. Captain Reynaud had been killed. After repairing their main damage, the two ships headed for a French port. On the 23rd, in foggy weather, the *Leander* of fifty, was sighted; the English ship quickly gained the two frigates. These separated. The *Leander* captured the *Cleopatra*, on board which there were only fifty Frenchmen, and it joined the *Ville-de-Milan*.²⁵¹

After a short engagement, this frigate, which had already suffered in the first battle, brought down its flag.

The frigate *Topaze* of forty, the corvettes *Département-des-Landes* of twenty-two, *Torche* of eighteen and the brig *Faune* of sixteen left Martinique on July 16 to return to Europe. These ships were placed under the command of Captain Baudin, of the *Topaze*. On the 19th, the English frigate of thirty-six, *Blanche*, Captain Mudge, was sighted. At ten o'clock, the action began. At ten thirty, *Blanche*, which was to windward, maneuvered to pass ahead of *Topaze*. Captain Baudin luffed, skimmed the rear of the *Blanche* and sent her, very close, an enfilade broadside. The *Topaze* continued the fight to windward; at eleven o'clock, the *Blanche* lowered her flag. The English frigate had received only a few volleys from the corvettes *Département-des-Landes* and *Torche*. She had eight killed and fifteen wounded. The *Blanche* completely disabled, had seven feet of water in the hold; Captain Baudin had her set on fire. On the night of August 1, the brig *Faune* separated from her preserves. On August 15, fifty leagues from Cape Finisterre, the French division was driven out by the sixty-four-gun vessels *Goliath* and *Raisonnable*. Commander Baudin gave the corvettes freedom of maneuver. The *Torche* was taken by the *Goliath*; The *Département-des-Landes* managed to escape. On the 16th, a few cannon shots were exchanged, at a great distance, between *Raisonnable* and *Topaze*. Calm returned. The breeze having risen from the west, the *Topaze* took advantage of it first and moved away; it entered Lisbon.²⁵²

Blocked by the English, this frigate had to wait eight months before finding the opportunity to leave. The *Topaze* anchored, on May 2, 1806, on the harbor of Brest, after having made several captures during its crossing. The brig the *Faune* was captured by the ship the *Goliath*, a hundred leagues southwest of Ouessant. The frigate the *Libre* of forty, attacked, on December 24, by the frigates the *Egyptienne* and the *Loire*, succumbed after a very strong resistance. During the course of the year 1805, we also had to regret the loss of the brig the *Actéon* and the corvettes the *Cyane* and the *Naiade*. These three vessels were taken by frigates.

In the course of October 1805, the British Admiralty formed a division comprising three sixty-four-gun ships, one fifty-gun ship, two frigates and transports. Five thousand men were embarked on these ships. The latter, having left separately from England, met at Funchal on the island of Madeira. After touching at Bahia to take on water, the expedition went to the Cape of Good Hope. The landing force, landed on January 5, 1806, marched on the city of Cape Town. On the 9th, the English found themselves in the presence of Lieutenant-General Janssens, who had come to meet them with all the forces at his disposal. Following an unfortunate battle, the Dutch retreated. A few days later, Lieutenant-General Janssens signed a capitulation by which the English became masters of all the possessions of Holland in the south of Africa. The Dutch troops were to be transported to Europe by the victors.²⁵³

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BOOK VI

Two squadrons, one commanded by Rear-Admiral Willaumez and the other by Rear-Admiral de Leissègues, leave Brest. Admirals Sir John Strachan and Sir John Borlase Warren are sent in pursuit. - Rear-Admiral de Leissègues' division is taken or destroyed in the battle of Santo Domingo. Rear-Admiral Willaumez cruises off Saint Helena. He goes to Cayenne, the Antilles and the north of the Bahama Channel. Separation of the *Vétéran*. Rear-Admiral Willaumez's squadron is dispersed by a gale. The *Impétueux* is taken. The *Valeureuse* and the *Eole*, on call in the United States, are sold. The other ships return to France separately. Cruise of Captain Leduc on the coasts of Iceland, Greenland and Spitsbergen. The brig the *Nearque* and the frigate the *Guerrière* fall into the hands of the English. Cruise of the ship captain the *Hermitte* on the western coasts of Africa and in the Antilles. The frigate the *President* is taken by the English. Division leaves Cadiz to supply Senegal and Cayenne. Capture of the brig the *Furet* and the frigate the *Rhin*. Division leaves Rochefort bound for the Antilles. Four frigates are taken by the enemy. The corvette the *Nedley* falls into our hands. Losses suffered by the French, in some particular engagements. Battle of the Pallas and the *Minerve*. Capture of the corvette the *Constance*. Order of the British Council, dated May 16, 1806, declaring the blockade of all coasts, ports and rivers from the Elbe to Brest. Berlin Decree opposing the continental blockade to the maritime blockade. Holland, Spain, Italy, Germany, then Prussia and Russia close their ports to the English. Although Denmark observes strict neutrality, the Court of London forms the project of seizing its monkfish. An English squadron anchors off Elsinore. Troops are put ashore. Bombardment of Copenhagen. The city is forced to surrender. The English take the Danish fleet. Denmark allies itself with France. Prejudice caused to England by the Berlin Decree. Modifications made by the Court of London to the provisions contained in the order of the council of May 16, 1806. Milan Decree. Immobility of our squadrons. Development given to constructions. Results obtained at Antwerp. Acquisition of Flushing. Reorganization of the Boulogne flotilla. Capture by the English of the corvette *Favorite* and the brig *Lynx*. Offensive taken by Great Britain and Russia against the Ottoman Porte. An English squadron appears before Constantinople. Skillful conduct of General Sebastiani. Admiral Duckworth moves away.²⁵⁴

Losses suffered while crossing the Dardanelles Strait. Failure of the expeditions attempted by the English on the coasts of Egypt and in the Rio de la Plata. The English seize the islands of Madeira and Curaçao.

I

The loss of the Battle of Trafalgar, the abandonment of the project of landing in England made available the fleet commanded by Ganteaume. Two divisions, intended for distant cruises, were formed in Brest. They were placed under the orders of Rear-Admirals Willaumez and Leissègues. One comprised six ships and the other five. On December 13, the eleven ships, taking advantage of a favorable moment, put to sea. After remaining together for thirty-six hours, the two divisions separated. Rear-Admiral Willaumez ran south with the eighty-gun *Foudroyant*, carrying his flag, and the seventy-four-gun *Vétéran*, *Cassard*, *Impétueux*, *Patriote* and *Eole*. These vessels were commanded by the ship captains Henry, Bonaparte, Faure, Leveyer Belair, Krom and Prévost Lacroix. The frigates the *Valeureuse* and the *Volontaire* were part of this division. Rear-Admiral Willaumez was going to the Cape of Good Hope. After a short stay in these waters, he was to cross, off St. Helena, the convoys returning from India and China. Admiral Willaumez was resupplying in Martinique, capturing merchant ships anchored in the harbors of the English colonies, and ending his campaign by destroying the fisheries of Newfoundland. He had orders, if the state of his provisions and spare parts permitted, to return via Iceland, Greenland, and Spitsbergen.²⁵⁵

The division of Rear-Admiral de Leissègues was composed of the ships *Impérial* of one hundred and twenty, the *Alexandre* of eighty, *Brave*, *Diomède* and *Jupiter*; of seventy-four. These ships were commanded by the ship captains Bigot, Garreau, Coudé, Henry and Laignel. The admiral had his flag on the *Impérial*. The frigates, the *Comète*, *Félicité* and the corvette *Diligente* were attached to this division. Rear-Admiral de Leissègues carried, to Santo-Domingo, a thousand men, arms, provisions and munitions. After having accomplished this mission, he was ordered to cruise for two months off the coast of Jamaica. If the English had, in these waters, forces superior to his own, he was to go to the Grande Sole and return to Rochefort or Lorient after having exhausted his provisions. The minister had ordered Rear-Admiral de Leissègues to pass by the north of the Azores. If this route had the advantage of putting him out of the direction followed by the English squadrons, it exposed him, on the other hand, in this season, to bad weather that ships leaving the port and manned by inexperienced crews could hardly withstand.

On the afternoon of December 15, the frigate *Arethusa*, which was escorting, in company with the frigate *Boadicea* and some corvettes, a convoy bound for the West Indies, became aware of the two French divisions. The English were to the north of Rear-Admiral Willaumez's ships, which they could only see from the top of the masts, and to the north-east of Rear-Admiral de Leissègues' division, from which they were not very far.²⁵⁶

The winds were blowing from the north-northeast. On the orders of the captain of the *Arethusa*, who commanded the escort, part of the English ships headed southwest. The warships took the northwest tack, chased by the division of Rear-Admiral de Leissègues. On the 16th, at daybreak, we had gained little in the wind; the admiral resumed his first course while the English headed south again. The captain of the *Arethusa* instructed the *Boadicea* to inform Admiral Cornwallis, off Ushant, of the sortie of the two French divisions. He sent a corvette to Ferrol and Cadiz to carry out the same mission with the ships cruising on the coasts of Spain. At the moment when the frigate *Arethusa* had sighted, in plain sight, the division of Rear-Admiral Willaumez, the latter was chasing a convoy escorted by the sixty-four-man ship *Polyphemus* and the frigate *Sirius*. Night interrupted the pursuit; however, two ships, carrying troops, fell into our hands. The frigate *Volontaire* was charged with escorting them to Tenerife where the prisoners were to be disembarked.

The news of the departure of the divisions commanded by Rear-Admirals Willaumez and de Leissègues reached England on December 24. Two squadrons were immediately ordered to be ready to sail. One, commanded by Sir John Borlase Warren, consisted of the ships *London* of ninety-eight, *Foudroyant* of eighty, *Ramillies*, *Hero*, *Namur*, *Repulse*, and *Courageux*, of seventy-four.²⁵⁷

The second squadron, at the head of which was placed Sir Richard Strachan, consisted of the *Saint-George* of ninety-eight, the *Caesar* of eighty, and the ships of seventy-four the *Centaur*, *Terrible*, *Triumph* and *Bellona*. Detained by contrary winds, these two squadrons did not put to sea until the second fortnight of the month of January. Sir John Borlase Warren had orders to touch at Madeira; from there, he went to the Antilles, unless he learned, with certainty, that the ships, which had left Brest, on the 13th of December, had another destination. If the French did not appear, he was to leave some ships at Jamaica and return to England. Sir Richard Strachan was going to Saint Helena. If he could not be given any information on the course of a French squadron, he was ordered to go to the Cape of Good Hope.

On November 26, that is to say eighteen days before the departure of Admirals Willaumez and Leissègues, Vice-Admiral Sir John Duckworth, who commanded the cruise before Cadiz, learned that a French squadron, strong of six vessels, three frigates and two corvettes, had been seen between Madeira and the Canaries. He supposed that it was the division of the commander Allemand, comprising six vessels, five French and the English vessel the *Calcutta* which it had seized. This division, which had done the greatest harm to English commerce, was actively sought. Vice-Admiral Duckworth, abandoning the blockade of Cadiz, set out in pursuit with the *Superb*, *Spencer*, *Donegal*, and *Powerful*, of seventy-four, the *Canopus* of eighty, the *Agamemnon* of sixty-four, and the frigates *Acasta* and *Amethyst*. Sir John Duckworth touched at Madeira, and communicated with Teneriffe; obtaining no information relative to the squadron he sought, he continued his course in a southerly direction.²⁵⁸

Arriving at the latitude of Cape Verde, he decided to turn back. The English were on their way to resume their post off Cadiz, when they encountered the *Arethusa* and her convoy. Sir John Duckworth learned that this frigate had been, on December 15, in sight of two French squadrons, one comprising six ships and the other five. He continued to run towards the north, in which direction, according to the captain of the *Arethusa*, he had some chance of meeting the French. On the 25th of December, the English squadron was in 31 degrees north latitude and 23 degrees west longitude, running close-hauled, with the tack to starboard, with winds from the east-north-east, when several sails were reported in the south-east. It was the squadron of Admiral Willaumez, which was sailing in a southerly direction. Sir John Duckworth, letting us arrive, set out in pursuit of the ships he had seen. On the 26th, at daybreak, three English vessels had gained us and the other three were out of sight. At one o'clock Admiral Duckworth resumed his first course. The situation of his squadron, at the time he raised the chase, was as follows: the flagship, the *Superb*, was seven miles from our last vessel; the *Spencer* was four miles from the *Superb* and the *Agamemnon* five miles from the *Spencer*. From the top of the masts of this last ship, the *Powerfull* could be seen; as for the other two ships, they were out of sight of the *Agamemnon*. Admiral Duckworth sent a frigate to England to inform the Admiralty of the encounter he had made, the strength of the French squadron and the direction it was following. Having no longer enough water to go to Cadiz, he made way for the Antilles.²⁵⁹

The English anchored, on January 12, at Barbados and, on the 19th, at Saint-Christophe where they were joined by the seventy-four ships the *Northumberland*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Cochrane, and the *Atlas*. There was no news of the arrival of a French squadron in the Caribbean Sea. Admiral Duckworth was preparing to rejoin his post, off Cadiz, when, on February 1st, he learned that French ships had been seen heading for Santo-Domingo. The English squadron immediately set sail; it consisted of seven ships, a frigate and a corvette. On the 3rd, it passed off Saint-Thomas and, on the 4th, it entered the Mona Passage; Finally, on the 5th, she was nine leagues to the south-east of the eastern end of the island of Santo Domingo.

We have seen that Rear-Admiral de Leissègues, abandoning, on December 16, the pursuit of the *Arethusa* and the ships placed under the escort of this frigate, had resumed the route, so unseaworthy, that his instructions ordered him to follow. On the 25th, in very bad weather, the Jupiter lost its topmast; the frigate *Comète* and the ship *Brave* reported a leak. A few days later, this last ship and the *Alexandre* disappeared. Fearing, if he continued to run in the same direction, that his squadron would be dispersed by the storm, Rear-Admiral de Leissègues gave up on passing to the west of the Azores. He anchored, on January 20, in front of Santo Domingo, with three ships. The troops, provisions and munitions were immediately disembarked. The *Alexandre* and the *Brave* arrived, on the 25th, at Santo Domingo. The admiral could go to Havana where his ships would have carried out, in complete safety, the work necessary to repair their damage.²⁶⁰

But he feared that he would be blocked by the English forces stationed in Jamaica, and, consequently, that he would be unable to fulfill his mission. He remained in Santo Domingo, assuming that he would be able to sail before his presence was known. On February 6, the *Diligente*, which was observing offshore, was sighted, heading for anchorage. She was firing cannon, and had, at the top of her mast, a signal announcing the presence of the enemy. The order was given to sail by cutting the cables and to prepare for combat. Unfortunately we were in no good position either to set sail or to fight. Disorder reigned on board our ships; The decks and batteries were cluttered with material. The sail was slow. The winds were blowing from the east-north-east; the squadron left Santo Domingo Bay heading west. Our ships, formed in convoy line, were arranged in the following order: *Alexandre*, *Impérial*, *Diomedé*, *Jupiter* and *Brave*. The English advanced in two columns. One of them consisted of the *Superb*, *Northumberland*, *Spencer* and *Agamemnon*; the other, was composed of the *Canopus*, *Donegal* and the *Atlas*. At the moment when the two squadrons were within cannon range, the English were out of order. The column, at the head of which marched the *Canopus*, was behind that led by the *Superb*. This last vessel, the *Northumberland* and the *Spencer* attacked us immediately. The *Superb* fought the *Alexander*, *Northumberland* the *Imperial*, and the *Spencer* the *Diomedes*.²⁶¹

Admiral de Leissègues, believing that he would succeed in putting the advanced ships of the enemy between two fires, signaled to close to the wind, the tacks to port. The *Alexandre* made the indicated movement and passed between the *Northumberland* and the *Spencer*. The signal, hoisted on board the *Imperial*, was not executed by any other ship; it therefore had the result of placing the *Alexandre* in a perilous position. The *Spencer* engaged in a very lively fight with this ship. The *Canopus*, *Donegal* and *Atlas*, passing in front of these two ships, sent broadsides of enfilade at the *Alexandre* which did it the greatest harm. The *Canopus* and the *Agamemnon* headed towards the *Imperial*; The *Donegal* attacked the *Brave*, and the *Atlas* the *Jupiter*. The first guns had been fired before ten o'clock; we were, at that moment, three leagues west-south-west of Santo Domingo. At eleven thirty-five minutes, the *Alexander*, after a very vigorous defence, lowered her flag. Her adversary, without worrying any more about an enemy who could not escape, joined the *Superb*. At eleven forty-five minutes, the *Brave* surrendered to the *Donegal*. The latter vessel went to the *Jupiter*, which the captain of the *Atlas*, complying with the orders of Admiral Duckworth, had abandoned to join the vessels which the *Imperial* was fighting. The *Donegal* fell upon the *Jupiter*, whose bowsprit got caught in her shrouds. The French vessel lowered her flag after a short engagement. The captains of the *Brave* and *Jupiter* had been seriously wounded, from the beginning of the action. The *Donegal* took the *Jupiter* in tow, and the frigate *Acasta* took the *Brave*. Six ships, the *Superb*, *Northumberland*, *Canopus*, *Atlas*, *Spencer* and *Agamemnon* surrounded the *Imperial* and the *Diomedé*.²⁶²

The fighting was very close; the cannonballs went through the walls of the French ships, dismantled their guns and killed the crew. On the *Imperial*, the battery of eighteen, then that of twenty-four were disabled. The admiral, giving an example of intrepidity, encouraged the crew to make stubborn resistance. A little before noon, five hundred men were out of action. The commander, his second, five officers, were seriously wounded; two of the admiral's aides-de-camp had been killed at his side. The mainmast and the mizzenmast were shot down. The admiral ordered his flag captain to approach the coast and to embay the ship. The cables having been cut by the cannonballs, it was not possible to execute this order. The *Imperial* ran aground, presenting the beam to the open sea; the foremast, the only one it had preserved, fell into the sea. The *Diomedé*, imitating the admiral's maneuver, ran aground near it. In this position, our ships exchanged cannon shots with the *Canopus* and the *Atlas*. Admiral Duckworth, who had gained the open sea, was quick to recall these two vessels. The *Imperial* and the *Diomedé*, stranded on rocky bottoms, were promptly smashed. Care was taken to save the crews. The heavy sea, the precautions to be taken to put the wounded ashore, the small number of boats available to the two French ships made this operation very difficult. On the 9th, it was not finished. That day, the English approached; after a short cannonade, they sent their boats on board the French vessels. The sea, which was very rough, did not allow communication with the land. The captain of the *Diomedé*, some officers and about a hundred men, belonging to this vessel, were taken prisoner.²⁶³

The English delivered the *Impérial* and the *Diomède* to the flames and they sailed away with the captured vessels; the *Brave* sank shortly after her arrival at Jamaica. The English had, in this affair, seventy-four killed and two hundred and sixty-four wounded. The losses suffered by the French were quite different. According to the letters of Admiral Duckworth, the *Alexander* had three hundred men out of action, the *Brave* two hundred and sixty and the *Jupiter* two hundred. The *Impérial* and the *Diomède* had been even more mistreated. The absolutely inexplicable instructions given by the ministry, the damage done in the Azores, as a result of these same instructions, the time spent in Santo Domingo to repair them, such were the causes which led to this encounter in which France lost five ships and several thousand men, killed, wounded or taken prisoner. These figures show only too clearly the inadequacy of the staffs, the crews and especially the men assigned to the artillery service. Indeed, in the conditions in which the battle of Santo Domingo was fought, it is impossible to admit that a squadron, comprising a ship of one hundred and twenty, one of eighty and three of seventy-four, attacked by a ship of eighty, five of seventy-four and one of sixty-four, could be taken or destroyed in its entirety.

Two divisions had left Brest on December 13, 1805. We know what happened to one of them; we still have to talk about the second. Rear-Admiral Willaumez was to, in accordance with his instructions, cruise on the Aiguilles Bank in order to intercept the convoys coming from India and China.²⁶⁴

In this hypothesis, he would have renewed his provisions at the Cape of Good Hope. Learning that this colony had fallen into the power of the English, the admiral set out on a cruise off Saint Helena. In April 1806, he went to Bahia to stock up on provisions and water.

On May 15, Admiral Willaumez anchored off Cayenne with the *Foudroyant*, flying his flag, the *Vétéran* and the *Valeureuse*; the other vessels, divided into two divisions, were sent on a cruise. The admiral had given his ships a rendezvous from where he intended to head for Barbados. Bad weather having prevented this junction, the ships composing his squadron set sail in isolation for Martinique, the second rendezvous assigned to them. The *Vétéran* arrived in this colony on June 9, the *Eole* and the *Impétueux* on the 17th, the *Foudroyant* and the *Valeureuse* on the 21st, the *Cassard* and the *Patriote* on the 24th. The *Vétéran*, having barely entered the bay of Fort-Royal, had sighted, offshore, the vessel the *Northumberland*. The *Eole* and the *Impétueux* had been pursued by a division of three vessels, two of seventy-four and one of eighty; the latter carried the flag of Rear-Admiral Cochrane. The arrival of the French squadron was therefore immediately known. On July 1, Rear-Admiral Willaumez set sail. Four ships were captured at Montserrat; sixty-five merchant vessels had been, a few days before, anchored off this island, in a position which was not protected. Warned of our presence, they had sailed to leeward. The admiral went to the island of Tortola; he had learned that three hundred vessels, ready to leave for England, were assembled at this point.²⁶⁵

This considerable convoy, whose destruction would have been a very serious loss for English commerce, had put itself in safety.

Losing hope of making prizes in the Caribbean Sea, Rear Admiral Villaumez continued his route and established his cruise in the north of the Bahama Channel. He thought that the commander of the British forces, learning of his departure, would leave the merchant ships free to return to Europe. On July 27, the squadron chased a convoy composed of eight ships. Only one could be hit; the pursuit of these ships, which were going to New York, led the squadron quite far to the north. On July 29, when day broke, the *Vétéran* was no longer in sight. The admiral remained several days at the point indicated as a rendezvous, in case of separation, without being joined by this vessel. The *Vétéran* had made its way to Europe. On August 10, it met a convoy of sixteen sails, going to Quebec, under the escort of the corvette the *Champion*. This corvette could not be reached, but six ships were taken and burned. On August 26, the *Vétéran*, having arrived in sight of land, was heading for Lorient when three ships were sighted. These ships, the Gibraltar of eighty and the frigates of forty the *Tribune* and the *Penelope*, covered themselves with sails and chased the French vessel. The latter, in the position in which it found itself, could only reach, without a fight, the small port of Concarneau. The windings of the pass, the narrowness of the channel, the shallowness of the water made this operation very difficult. The *Vétéran* attempted it and he executed it successfully.

Rear Admiral Willaumez, after having waited in vain for the *Vétéran*, had come again to position himself in the north of the Bahama Channel.²⁶⁶

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Either he had been drawn too far north, chasing ships going to New York, or he had lost time looking for the *Vétéran*, the Antilles convoys had passed when he resumed his cruise. He then set sail for Newfoundland, where he was to destroy the fisheries. On August 19, at 22 degrees north latitude and 65 degrees west longitude, a gale of extreme violence dispersed the squadron, which suffered, in this circumstance, a real disaster. Three vessels, the *Foudroyant*, the *Impétueux* and the *Eole*, were completely dismasted and lost their rudders. The *Impétueux* threw part of its artillery into the sea and the *Eole* its battery of forecastles. The *Patriote* dismasted its topmasts and mizzenmast. The *Cassard* had the good fortune to suffer only minor damage; its captain decided to return to Brest, where it arrived without any incident occurring during its crossing. The *Foudroyant* rigged a few masts, installed a makeshift rudder and headed for Havana. On September 15, a few leagues from the port, the *Foudroyant* was sighted by the *Anson* - a forty-four. This frigate, taking advantage of its superiority in terms of maneuver, took up an advantageous position and opened fire on the *Foudroyant*. The latter fired a few volleys at the *Anson*, which forced the vessel to move away. The *Impétueux* was, on the 15th of September, a few leagues from the entrance to the Chesapeake, when she was chased by the vessels *Bellona* and *Belleisle*, of eighty-two, and the frigate *Melampus*. The *Impétueux*, unable, with makeshift masts, to escape the vessels which were pursuing her, threw herself on the coast at Cape Henry. Being within the limit of the territorial waters, she supposed that she would not be attacked.²⁶⁷

The English, without worrying about the neutrality of the United States, opened fire on the French vessel, took control of it and delivered it to the flames. The complaints made by the French minister remained without result; the government of the United States did not want to notice the insult done to its flag. The *Patriote*, the *Eole* and the *Valeureuse* entered the Chesapeake. The *Foudroyant*, after repairing in Havana, joined these three vessels. None of them being in a condition to put to sea again, Admiral Willaumez headed for Brest where he anchored on February 27, 1807. The *Patriote* arrived in this port at the beginning of 1808. The impossibility of repairing the *Eole* and the *Valeureuse* having been recognized, these two ships were sold in America.

The British Admiralty had sent, as has been said above, Admirals Sir John Borlase Warren and Sir Richard Strachan, the first with seven ships and the second with six, in pursuit of the ships that had left Brest on December 13, 1805. The English squadrons, after having searched in vain for Admirals Willaumez and de Leissègues, had returned to Portsmouth. Both had left some time later; Sir Richard Strachan had set sail on May 19, and Sir John Borlase Warren on June 4. The latter had anchored at Barbados on July 12, with the *Foudroyant* of eighty, flying his flag, five ships of seventy-four and a frigate. Thus, at the moment when Admiral Willaumez was establishing his cruise outside the debouquements [landing, disembarkment], a squadron, sent in pursuit of him, appeared in the Caribbean Sea.²⁶⁸

Having arrived a few days earlier, Sir John Borlase Warren could have met him. Accurately informed, by neutral vessels, of the position that Admiral Willaumez occupied, he set out in pursuit. On the night of August 18, the English squadron was about twenty leagues from ours; hit by the same gale, it was dispersed but suffered no serious damage. The ships *Bellona* and *Belleisle* and the frigate *Melampus*, which had forced the *Impétueux* to throw itself ashore, belonged to Sir Richard Strachan's squadron. Rear-Admiral Louis, with a third squadron, had been sent on a cruise, fifty leagues off Belleisle, to intercept Rear-Admiral Willaumez on his return.

This campaign had been completely fruitless. A squadron of six vessels, having held the sea for nearly eight months, had captured seventeen merchant ships.

II

The forty-four frigates the *Revanche* and the *Guerrière*, captains Leduc and Hubert, the forty-four-ship *Sirène*, captain Lambert, and the brig the *Néarque*, captain Jourdain, were ordered to go to the coasts of Iceland, Greenland and Spitzberg. This division, placed under the command of Captain Leduc, of the *Revanche*, was charged with pursuing the English and Russian whalers. It left Lorient on March 3, 1806.²⁶⁹

As soon as they were at sea, it was noticed that the *Nearque*, sailing very poorly, could not follow the frigates. Captain Leduc continued on his route without waiting for her. This brig was captured by the frigate *Niobé* on the very night following their departure. The winter had lasted very late. The division, stopped by the ice, went back down to the south; after cruising for some time between the Azores and Cape Clear, it resumed its route towards the north. On May 21, the frigates reached the south-eastern tip of Iceland; on the 30th, at 72 degrees of latitude, they encountered the ice. On June 12, the French division arrived in sight of Spitzberg. Our ships could not go beyond the seventy-sixth degree of latitude. After a very thick fog, which had enveloped the three ships for several days, the *Guerrière* found herself separated from her convicts.

The British Admiralty had learned, at the beginning of July, of the mission entrusted to Captain Leduc. Three frigates, the *Blanche* of thirty-eight, the *Phæbe* of thirty-six and the *Thames* of thirty-two, were immediately designated to go to the Arctic Sea. The *Phæbe* and the *Thames*, which were at Leith, went to the Shetland Islands where the *Blanche* was to join them. When the latter arrived at the rendezvous, the *Phæbe* and the *Thames* had left to search for the *Guerrière*. The *Blanche*, having had very precise information on the waters where this frigate was, also set out in pursuit of it. She joined it on July 18; After an artillery battle, which lasted about an hour, the French frigate lowered its flag. It had forty men out of action; the mizzenmast was down. One officer and two men, slightly wounded, such was the figure of the losses of the *Blanche*; finally, the damage to this frigate was insignificant.²⁷⁰

Scurvy had caused great havoc on board the *Guerrière*; forty-two men had died and eighty were on the frames. The defense of the French frigate had obviously been affected by the situation of the personnel. Nevertheless, it cannot be admitted that the crew of the *Guerrière*, even reduced to one hundred and twenty-two men, did not make a more *effective* defense. It seems obvious that this crew had no military training.

After a break of a few days at Patrix Fiord, Captain Leduc went south of Cape Farewell to intercept ships coming from the Davis Strait. He returned to the north of Ireland where he remained until August 28. The frigates then headed south and cruised under Cape Clear until September 17. On the 27th, they anchored at Bréhat, near Saint-Malo; they were taken into the Pontrieux River. The crews of the *Sirène* and the *Revanche* had suffered greatly from scurvy. These two frigates, which had lost ninety-five men, brought back two hundred and seventeen sick men. The Navy Department had not taken sufficient measures, in terms of clothing, food and medicine, to alleviate the rigors of this difficult campaign. Hence the very high number of dead and sick. The *Guerrière* had fought against the *Blanche* with two hundred and fifty-eight men, whereas when she left France she had three hundred and eighty.

During this cruise, which cost us a frigate and a brig, fourteen ships, one Russian and thirteen English, were sunk or burned. The damage done to the enemy's trade was estimated at two and a half million francs.²⁷¹

The seventy-four-strong ship *Regulus*, the forty-strong frigates *Président* and *Cybèle* and the brig *Surveillant* left Lorient on October 31. This division, placed under the command of Captain Hermitte of the *Regulus*, had orders to destroy the English establishments on the west coast of Africa. Once this operation was completed, it was to remain on a cruise in the Antilles for some time. Captain Hermitte, who had left France without being seen by the enemy, successfully carried out the first part of his mission. He destroyed several English trading posts and captured the twenty-eight-strong corvettes *Favorite*, *Otway* and *Plower*, twenty-strong, slave ships and a few merchant ships. After refueling in Brazil, Captain l'Hermitte went to the Caribbean Sea where he took some prizes. The ship and the two frigates were north of Saint-Domingue when, on August 18, a gale of extreme violence separated them. The *Cybèle*, dismasted of her three topmasts, entered the Chesapeake. The *Regulus*, which had a large number of scorbutics [Scurvy], headed for France. This ship, although pursued, upon landing, by superior forces, anchored in the harbor of Brest, on October 2, 1807. The *Président* had also headed for our ports. On September 27, about twenty leagues from the coast of France, this frigate was chased by Rear-Admiral Louis' division, which consisted of six ships. Attacked by the corvette *Dispatch*, which caused some damage, and joined by the *Canopus* of eighty, she lowered her flag.²⁷²

The cruise of the *Regulus* and the frigates the *Cybèle* and the *Président* had cost the enemy three warships and twenty-three merchant ships. The number of prisoners amounted to five hundred and seventy; as for the damage done to English trade, it was estimated at five million francs. The *Cybèle*, after having repaired its damage, returned to our ports.

At the same time as we used the remains of our navy to pursue British trade, we had to worry about supplying our colonies. This task, as a result of England's maritime superiority, was made more difficult every day. On the evening of February 23, the frigates *Hortense*, *Rhin*, *Hermione* and *Thémis*, captains La Marre La Meillerie [Delamarre de Lamellerie], Chesneau, Mahé and Jugan and the brig *Furet* set sail from Cadiz. These ships, placed under the orders of the commander of the *Hortense*, were carrying troops, arms and munitions to Senegal and Cayenne. After having accomplished this mission, Captain La Marre La Meillerie [Delamarre de Lamellerie] was to, before returning his division to France, cruise to the wind of the Antilles, off Bermuda and the Azores. The breeze, which was blowing from the east, had driven the blockade squadron out to sea. However, the frigate *Hydra*, which had managed to get close to the coast, sighted our ships. At about three o'clock in the morning, she reached the *Furet*, which had remained behind, due to the inferiority of her march. The brig, after having sent a volley at the *Hydra*, lowered her flag. Captain La Marre La Meillerie [Delamarre de Lamellerie] touched at Senegal and Cayenne; he left the latter point on April 7 to go to the Antilles. The French division remained for some time to the north of Dominica and the outlet of Antigua, then it put into Porto Rico to resupply.²⁷³

The four frigates put to sea again at the end of May. After cruising at Bermuda, the Azores and under Cape Clear, they set sail to return to France. On July 27, they were at 49 degrees north latitude and 9 degrees west longitude, running under full sail, with a nice west-southwest breeze. In the evening, two ships were sighted. The closest was the *Mars* of eighty-two and the second the *Africa* of sixty-four. These ships belonged to the division of Commodore Goodwin Keats which was blockading the port of Rochefort with six vessels. The *Mars* immediately set out in pursuit of the French division; This vessel was in front and at a great distance from his squadron. He made signals to the *Africa*, which that vessel repeated, in order to inform Commodore Goodwin Keats of the presence of our vessels. The *Mars* lost sight of the French frigates during the night, but saw them again when day broke. One of them, the *Rhin*, was astern and far from the other three; the English vessel was rapidly gaining on it. Such was the situation when the captain of the *Hortense* signalled to Captain Chesneau that he left him free to manoeuvre as he thought fit for the safety of his vessel. The three frigates continued their course covered with sails. The *Rhin* threw anchors and guns into the sea, but her efforts to escape the pursuit of the English vessel were useless. This frigate, joined, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, by the *Mars*, lowered its flag.

At the moment when the captain of the *Hortense* had taken the decision to abandon the *Rhin*, the *Mars* was the only enemy vessel that was in sight.²⁷⁴

The conduct of the division commander cannot be explained. Four frigates, with eighteen in battery, had to fight a ship of eighty-two. They could fear finding new enemies before reaching Rochefort, but, on the other hand, the coast of France was close and the encounter they had had gave reason to believe that the blockade squadron was offshore. Finally, military honor demanded that the *Rhin* not be delivered to the enemy without a fight. Fearing to find the port of Rochefort blockaded, the captain of the *Hortense* headed for the Gironde. Arriving at the entrance, he made reconnaissance signals to which the land did not respond. The three frigates reached the anchorage, receiving cannon fire which, moreover, did them no harm. Nothing could, as the ship captain La Marre La Meillerie wrote to the minister, prevent an English division from anchoring in the Verdon harbor.

This cruise, during which the French navy lost a frigate, cost English trade only a few merchant ships. Commander La Marre La Meillerie denied having returned in July, claiming that his frigates had suffered damage. In any case, his division could only have had a serious chance of escaping the enemy by heading for our ports after the equinox and taking advantage of a strong westerly wind.

The frigates *Gloire*, *Infatigable*, *Minerve* and *Armide*, of forty, and *Thétis* of thirty-six, captains Soleil, Girardias, Collet, Langlois and Jugan, and the brigs *Lynx* and *Sylphe* left Rochefort on September 24. These ships, placed under the command of Captain Soleil, carried troops and munitions to the Antilles.²⁷⁵

Around midnight, several sails were seen in the west-northwest. The French division let it sail to the south-southwest in order to get away from these ships. A fresh breeze was blowing from the north-northeast. When day broke, Commodore Sir Samuel Hood's squadron, which was blockading the port of Rochefort, was in sight. It included the ninety-eight-gun *Windsor Castle* and the seventy-four-gun ships the *Centaure*, the *Achille*, the *Monarch*, the *Revenge* and the *Mars*. The *Monarch*, which had taken the lead of the fighters, began, around five o'clock in the morning, to fire with its fighter guns on the *Armide*. At six o'clock, the *Indefatigable* took the wind, starboard tack, and ran towards the west. The *Mars* set out in pursuit. The *Thetis* and the brigs steered to port, followed by the ship *Windsor Castle*. The *Gloire*, the *Minerve* and the *Armide* did not separate.

At ten o'clock, the *Monarch*, having reached the height of the *Armide* and the *Gloire*, engaged in a very lively fight with these two ships. Around half past ten, the English ship, very light, was manoeuvring with difficulty when it was joined by the *Centaure*, carrying the guidon of Commodore Samuel Hood. This ship cannonaded the *Gloire* and the *Armide* while the *Monarch* fought the *Minerve*. A little before noon, this frigate and the *Armide* lowered their flag. The *Indefatigable*, reached by *Mars*, surrendered to this vessel at half past twelve. The *Gloire* moved away, keeping close to the wind, starboard tack, followed by the *Centaure*. The *Mars*, which had not suffered in its engagement with the *Indefatigable*, chased the French frigate and reached it at three o'clock in the afternoon.²⁷⁶

After a short cannonade, the *Gloire* lowered its flag. The English had not paid dearly for the capture of these four frigates. They had three killed on the *Centaur*, and four on the *Monarch*; the number of wounded rose to four on the first of these ships, and to twenty-five on the second. Not a single man on the *Mars* had been hit by the fire of the *Infatigable*. The *Thétis* and the two brigs could not be reached; these three ships arrived at their destination. The *Thétis* seized, on returning to France, the corvette *Nedley* of sixteen guns.

The fourteen-gun brig *La Tapageuse* was captured on the night of April 4th at the entrance to the Gironde by the boats of *La Pallas*. The next day, *La Flûtele Garonne* and the brig *La Malicieuse*, chased by this frigate in sight of Cordouan, threw themselves ashore; these two vessels were demolished by the sea. On July 14th, around ten o'clock in the evening, twelve boats belonging to the English cruise entered the Gironde. They headed towards the brigs *Le César* and *Le Teaser* which were at anchor at the entrance, with a convoy placed under their escort. The sixteen-gun *Cesar*, anchored furthest out, was surrounded, captured and taken offshore. The convoy, taking advantage of the current, moved away. *Le Teaser* and the land batteries opened fire on the enemy boats; one of them, hit by a cannonball, sank. The English had, in this affair, nine men killed, thirty-nine wounded and they left nineteen prisoners in our hands.

A squadron, commanded by Vice-Admiral Thornborough, blockaded the port of Rochefort. On May 14, the English being anchored on the roadstead of the Basques, the *Pallas* of forty came, near the island of Aix, to observe movements.²⁷⁷

Admiral Allemand ordered the *Minerve* of forty, Captain Collet, to go to meet the enemy ship with the brigs *Lynx* and *Sylphe*. The order was given to the frigates *Armide* and *Infatigable* to be ready to set sail. At eleven o'clock in the morning, a very lively fight began between the *Pallas* and the *Minerve*. The English frigate approaching his squadron, Captain Collet decided to board it. He managed to hook the *Pallas*, but, due to their speed, the two ships separated. The moorings of one of the davit anchors of the *Minerve* having been broken, the anchor went to the bottom, taking the cable with it which quickly sailed. The frigate came headlong into the wind; before the cable had been cut and the sails set, the *Pallas* had moved away. The English frigate rallied its squadron towed by the *King's Fisher*; the *Minerve* returned to anchor.

On October 12, the flute* the *Salamandre*, pursued, near Saint-Malo, by the twenty-six-gun corvette the *Constance*, two gunboats and a cutter, ran aground in the bay of Erqui, under the protection of a battery of two pieces. After having sustained a very lively engagement, the *Salamandre* lowered its colors. Unable to lead this vessel out to sea, the English delivered it to the flames. Shortly afterwards, the *Constance* hit and could not be refloated. This corvette, suffering greatly from the fire of the French battery, was abandoned by its crew. Boats leaving from land refloated the *Constance* and brought it into Saint-Malo.²⁷⁸

*Flute is a type of cargo vessel named after a Dutch vessel of this type

III

When the victories of the imperial armies, in the memorable campaign of 1806, delivered the shores of Germany to France, England wanted to prevent all trade by neutrals with the ports that had fallen into our hands. She could only achieve this result by placing, in front of each of them, a force sufficient to prohibit access. Whatever the extent of her resources, this task was beyond her strength. She did not allow herself to be stopped by this difficulty. For a long time now, the Court of London had known no other international rule than her will. Finally, since the battle of Trafalgar, the arrogance of our adversaries had no limits. An order of the British Council, dated May 16, 1806, declared blockaded all coasts, ports, and rivers from the Elbe to Brest inclusive. This blockade, purely fictitious, was to be as rigorously observed by the neutrals as if it had been real, that is to say, supported by sufficient forces to make access to all the points indicated by the Cabinet of St. James dangerous. Thus, England could, with a simple notification, blockade the largest stretches of coast, and, without effort on her part, without any sacrifice, prohibit all maritime commerce to her enemies. The Emperor responded to this new abuse of force by a decree, issued in Berlin, on November 21, 1806, placing the British Isles in a state of blockade.²⁷⁹

It was no longer permitted to trade with the United Kingdom; all goods, coming from England or its colonies, were henceforth to be confiscated. Vessels, having touched at any point of Great Britain or its colonies, were not admitted to our ports. The Emperor opposed the maritime blockade with the continental blockade. The Berlin decree was applied not only in France but among our allies and in the countries occupied by our troops. Holland, Spain, Italy and Germany prohibited the entry of their ports to ships from Great Britain. At the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit, the sovereigns of Prussia and Russia undertook to observe the provisions of the Berlin decree. In the north of Europe, two powers, Sweden and Denmark, had not adhered to the continental blockade. Sweden had been, since the Revolution, the enemy of France and the ally of England. Denmark, which still remembered the events of 1801, wanted to remain outside the conflicts which were agitating Europe. During the course of the last war, it had sent an army to the borders of Holstein in order to repel, whatever the aggressor, any violation of territory. Thus, Denmark had, in all circumstances, scrupulously fulfilled the obligations attached to its position as a neutral power. Nevertheless, the cabinet of Saint-James resolved to seize the Danish fleet, the possession of which it had long coveted. When the clauses of the Treaty of Tilsit were known, the British government hastened the final preparations for the expedition.²⁸⁰

Twenty-five ships of the line, forty frigates and nearly four hundred merchant ships put to sea at the end of July. This large armament carried twenty thousand landing troops to which were to be joined seven thousand English who were in Stralsund.

The British fleet, having entered the Sound without encountering any resistance, anchored at the beginning of August in front of Elsinore. It occupied the two Belts in order to prevent any communication between Holstein and the islands of Funen and Seeland. The Danish government was then ordered to surrender the fortress of Kronembourg, the port, the city of Copenhagen and the fleet. The Crown Prince of Denmark, who exercised power with the title of regent, having haughtily rejected these humiliating proposals, the English army landed to the north and south of Copenhagen. This city was almost without defenders since the Danes, believing themselves to be completely safe on the side of Great Britain, had sent their troops to the land frontiers. The English raised numerous batteries, mainly comprising howitzers and mortars. On September 2, a violent fire was opened on Copenhagen; the bombardment lasted three days. Part of the city was destroyed and several thousand men, women and children perished. The Danes, obliged to yield to misfortune, signed, on the 7th, a capitulation under the terms of which their fleet was handed over to the English. The latter retained the right to occupy the fortress of Kronembourg and the city of Copenhagen for six weeks. As soon as the Danish ships were ready to sail, the English army re-embarked and the expedition set sail, taking with it sixteen ships, frigates and a vast amount of equipment.²⁸¹

This event, which had a very great impact in Europe, aroused general indignation. It brought about what the English wanted to prevent; Denmark threw itself into the arms of France. England was quick to realize that the Berlin decree was causing it serious harm. If it prevented the trade of neutrals with France and its allies, on the other hand, it no longer sold anything. The colonies, and almost all of them belonged to it, no longer had any outlets and their products remained in stores. Finally, as a consequence of the continental blockade, it no longer received certain products, such as northern wood, tar, ropes and other supplies necessary for its navy. The cabinet of Saint-James, not relying on any principle and having, in these sorts of questions, no other objective than profit, did not hesitate to modify the provisions previously adopted. It imagined, to satisfy the complaints of the English merchants, a new combination which, moreover, was no less contrary to the law of nations than the order of the council of May 16, 1806. Henceforth, merchant ships, belonging to a nation which was not at war with Great Britain, could go to any port which they judged suitable on condition of having touched in England, either to carry goods there, or to take them. Finally, it was necessary that these ships had paid, in an English port, customs duties, the amount of which was indicated. On the other hand, any ship not fulfilling the conditions set out above was declared a good prize if it was encountered heading towards one of the ports considered by our adversaries to be blockaded.²⁸²

Thus, the Court of London was willing to allow the neutrals to use their rights, but this act, of apparent justice, hid a financial operation. The neutrals became, from a commercial point of view, tributaries of England. The opponents, if there were any, were excluded from the combination and consequently from the profits. The reprisals, which such an abuse of force was to bring, were not long in coming. On December 17, by a decree, dated Milan, the Emperor declared the British Isles in a state of blockade at sea as on land. In accordance with the provisions of the Milan decree, any neutral vessel which submitted to the conditions imposed by the crown of England lost the guarantee of its flag and was declared a good prize.

At the beginning of the year 1807, we had seven vessels at Brest, two at Lorient, five at Rochefort and three at Toulon. Vice-Admiral Rosily, who was at Cadiz with five vessels, and Rear-Admiral Allemand, commanding the Rochefort squadron, received orders to put to sea as soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself; they were both to go to Toulon. The continual presence of the English cruisers before Cadiz and Rochefort kept these two squadrons at anchor. The Brest squadron and the divisions of Lorient and Toulon remained immobile. The principal efforts of the navy were directed towards construction; These were pushed with the greatest activity not only in France but in Holland and Italy. The Emperor pressed Spain to follow this example, but it was difficult to obtain anything from a government whose finances were in disorder and which had no authority.²⁸³

The Antwerp arsenal was taking on a new development every day; we had five vessels of seventy-four afloat, and, on the shipyards, three which were almost completed. Flushing, on the island of Walcheren, had been ceded to us by Holland. It was in this port that the vessels, built in Antwerp, completed their armament.

The ports of Boulogne, Wimereux and Ambleteuse were silted up by several feet. On the other hand, a large number of buildings, prams, gunboats, gunboats, barges, built with green wood, could no longer navigate without danger. Finally, the boats intended for transport, former coasters bought from the trade, were completely out of service. In view of this state of affairs, it was urgent to take a decision. The Dutch flotilla was sent back to the Texel; part of the personnel went to the ships we had at Flushing. In the French flotilla, three or four hundred vessels, chosen from among the best, were repaired. A certain number of men were sent to Brest to form the crews of new ships being fitted out in that port. The Boulogne flotilla, thus reorganized, was able to carry sixty thousand men and three or four thousand horses. If a favorable opportunity ever arose to make the expedition to England, it was assumed that we would find in Holland and France the resources necessary to transport the rest of the invasion army. The Emperor wanted to assemble, in our ports and in those of our allies, large maritime and military resources.²⁸⁴

The obligation to monitor our movements, over such a large stretch of coastline, was to require, on the part of England, a large deployment of forces. Finally, with these provisions, an order was sufficient to direct, to any point in Great Britain or its colonies, troops and ships.

The corvette *Favorite* and the brig *Lynx* were taken, in 1807, *Favorite* by the boats of the frigate *Galatea* and *Lynx* by the frigate *Jason*.

IV

At the beginning of the year 1807, the English navy suffered, in the Mediterranean, a failure which was keenly felt in London. The failure of our adversaries was principally caused by the skilful and energetic conduct of General Sebastiani, our ambassador at Constantinople. The Courts of London and St. Petersburg, after useless efforts to detach the Porte from the French alliance, had decided to use force to achieve this result. While a Russian army was crossing the Dniester, the English navy was preparing to attack Constantinople and Alexandria. On the 19th of February, Sir John Duckworth left the anchorage of Tenedos with seven vessels, two frigates, corvettes and bombards. The English squadron, driven by a fresh southerly breeze, crossed the Dardanelles, without suffering any other loss than that of six men killed and fifty-one wounded.²⁸⁵

Whether through negligence or treason, the fortifications which defended the strait had been left in a state of almost complete abandonment. The English saw, near Cape Nagara, a Turkish division, composed of a sixty-four-man ship, four frigates and a few corvettes. These vessels occupied an anchorage which was not protected by any battery; it seemed that they wanted to deliver them to Admiral Duckworth. The Turkish ships, abandoned by part of their crews, threw themselves on the coast and were set on fire by the English, who only lost thirty men out of action, four killed and twenty-six wounded.

On February 21, Sir John Duckworth arrived before Constantinople. Sir Charles Arbuthnot, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, was on the flagship. He addressed, that same day, to the Divan an extremely pressing ultimatum. Sir Charles demanded the dismissal of our ambassador, an immediate declaration of war on France, the surrender of the Turkish fleet to the British navy and the occupation of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits by the English and the Russians. If the Porte did not accept these conditions, Sir John Duckworth would bombard Constantinople. While awaiting a response to this haughty summons, the English went to the anchorage of the Princes' Islands, on the coast of Asia.

General Sebastiani had displayed, since the beginning of this crisis, very great energy. By his skill, his decision, he revived the courage of the Sultan who determined to resist the demands of England. While the negotiations were being dragged out in order to gain time, the greatest activity reigned in Constantinople.²⁸⁶

On all favorable points, batteries were erected. General Sebastiani, surrounded by some French officers of engineering and artillery, directed the works with the most complete authority. His orders were executed with enthusiastic ardor by the population, happy to know that they were going to fight the English. When the Sultan believed himself strong enough to repel the British fleet, he broke off the negotiations begun with Sir Charles Arbuthnot.

Admiral Duckworth could not hide from himself the difficulties of his position. If he carried out the threats made to the Porte, he was running towards failure; On the other hand, if his ships came out of an attack on Constantinople with serious damage, would he succeed in recrossing the Dardanelles? Finally, he saw no less clearly that he exposed himself, if he delayed his departure too long, to finding the strait seriously defended. After weighing these various considerations, Admiral Duckworth decided to retreat. He anchored, on March 2, at the entrance to the Sea of Marmara. On the 3rd, the English squadron set sail, with a fresh northerly breeze, to cross the Dardanelles again. Some French officers, sent by General Sebastiani, had displayed the greatest zeal in organizing the defense, but their work was not finished when the enemy presented himself. They did not have the resources, moreover, to replace the old-fashioned equipment, long since forgotten by the Turks on both sides of the strait. However, Admiral Duckworth could see that things had changed; his squadron, when it was out of gun range of the Turkish batteries, had twenty-nine killed and one hundred and thirty-eight wounded.²⁸⁷

The English made a descent on the coasts of Egypt; after having gained some advantages, they were beaten by the Turks, who had received reinforcements, and forced to re-embark. In the month of July 1807, the British troops entered Buenos Ayres and Montevideo. A Frenchman, Mr. de Liniers, who was in the service of Spain, rallied the troops and the population, defeated the English and imposed a capitulation on them after which they regained the ships of the expedition. The entry of the French into Portugal allowed England to seize the island of Madeira. This taking of possession took place on December 26, 1807; On January 1 of the same year, our adversaries occupied the island of Curaçao, belonging to Holland.²⁸⁸

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BOOK VII

Rear Admiral Allemand leaves Rochefort. He anchors in the Gulf of Juan. Departure of Admiral Ganteaume for Corfu. His return to Toulon. Critical position of Rear Admiral Rosily in Cadiz. Battle of June 6 and 10. The French squadron lowers its colors. Special engagements. The English seize Marie-Galante and Désirade. Events in India since the arrival of Admiral Linois in Isle-de-France in 1803. Captures made in the Strait of Malacca. The French division, after touching at Batavia, goes to the China Seas. Encounter with a convoy coming from Canton. Admiral Linois moves away. Importance attached to this affair in England. Displeasure of the Emperor. The *Marengo*, *Belle-Poule* and *Atalante* before Visigapatam. After a glorious defence, the *Psyché*, captain Bergeret, is taken by the *San-Fiorenzo*. Capture of the ship of the East India Company, the *Brunswick*, by the *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule*. Encounter, made by these two ships, of a fleet of the company, escorted by the *Bleinheim*. The *Marengo*, *Belle-Poule* and the *Atalante* go to the Cape of Good Hope. The *Atalante* is thrown ashore. Admiral Linois cruises on the west coast of Africa. The *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule*, heading for Europe, fall into the squadron of Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren. After a very fine defence, these two ships lower their flag. Combat of the frigate la *Canonnière* and the ship le *Tremendous*. La *Canonnière* and *Volontaire* at the Cape of Good Hope. Cruises made by *Sémillante*, *Canonnière*, *Manche* and *Caroline* stationed at Isle-de-France.

I

At the beginning of the year 1808, the Emperor renewed the order already given to admirals Rosily and Allemand to go to Toulon. At the request of the French government, six Spanish vessels, placed under the command of Admiral Valdès, received the same destination.²⁸⁹

This division, which was not observed by the English, set sail as soon as the wind was favorable, but it headed for the Balearic Islands and entered Mahon from where it never left again. Admiral Rosily, tightly blocked by the English, could hardly put to sea. Admiral Allemand, seizing a favorable opportunity, set sail on January 17 with the ships *Majestueux* of one hundred and twenty, carrying his flag, the *Ajax*, *Suffren*, *Lion* and *Magnanime*, of eighty, captains Brouard, Petit, Louvel, Bonamy and Jugan. Three English frigates were sighted; two headed southwest, the direction in which they expected to find the blockade squadron, and the third followed our movements. When night fell, the French ships, which until then had been sailing north, set a course west. The breeze, which was blowing very fresh from the east, allowed us to quickly reach the open sea. The next day, we had not a single ship in sight.

On January 26, the winds were blowing from the west, very fresh, with the appearance of a gale. At four o'clock in the evening, the squadron, formed in two columns, entered the strait. The flagship was at the head of the right column, that is to say, the one which was to be closest to the coast of Africa. Our ships, which were in full combat readiness, had, moreover, taken the necessary measures to anchor if circumstances required it. At six o'clock, the squadron, making ten knots under reduced sail, had not yet seen land. The wind was becoming stronger and violent squalls were blowing in. "If I had been less near the coast," wrote Admiral Allemand to the minister, whom we will let himself relate his entry into the strait, "I would have put to cape, but the wind was carrying me there."²⁹⁰

I would have put to the cape, but the wind carried me there. I found, however, very perilous to enter the strait without seeing land. However risky this course was, it seemed to me the best; I therefore set sail accordingly. At ten o'clock in the evening, I discovered Cape Spartel a little league ahead of me. I maneuvered to avoid it and enter the strait, making, under the topsails on the tone, ten to twelve knots. At two o'clock, I was abeam of Gibraltar. It is possible that I had been seen, for they burned baits in the bay. The winds changed to the northwest, and, at daybreak, I was eleven leagues to the east-quarter-southeast of Gibraltar. This entry into the strait, in a terrible wind and the darkness of the night, will be long engraved in the memory of the sailors who make up the squadron. " Admiral Allemand anchored a few days later in the Jouan Gulf.

Vice-Admiral Ganteaume had taken command of the Toulon squadron on February 1, comprising the *Commerce de Paris* of one hundred and ten, on which he had his flag, the *Robuste* of eighty-two, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Cosmao Dumanoir, the *Génois*, the *Annibal* and the *Borée*, of eighty. These ships were commanded by the ship captains Violette, Montalan, the Hermitte, Infernet and Senez. Ganteaume set sail on the 10th, joined Admiral Allemand, who had been waiting for him for twenty-four hours outside the harbor, and he headed for the Ionian Islands. An English squadron, cruising on the seven islands, was interrupting our communications with Italy. Admiral Ganteaume was to surprise the blockade squadron, land troops, arms and munitions at Corfu and allow, by his presence, the arrival of the convoys, held up in the ports of Italy, for fear of the enemy.²⁹¹

The day after setting sail, the wind was blowing like a storm, and the squadron set sail. The *Commerce-de-Paris* lost its two topmasts and broke its lower yards. Finally, four ships, the *Robuste*, the *Génois*, the *Annibal* and the *Borée* separated from the squadron. The *Commerce-de-Paris* was taken in tow by the *Magnanime*. The squadron, reduced to six ships, anchored on February 23 in the harbor of Corfu, without having seen the enemy. On the 25th, Admiral Ganteaume, leaving the *Commerce-de-Paris* at anchor to allow her to repair her damage, raised his flag on the *Magnanime* and set sail with the five Rochefort ships. It will be noted that the squadron of Rear-Admiral Allemand had remained entirely with the flagship. The commander-in-chief, having arrived in sight of Cape Santa-Maria, the last rendezvous assigned to the squadron, did not find the ships he was looking for. These, gathered under the flag of Admiral Cosmao, had put into Taranto. On March 13, the squadron, which was heading again towards Corfu, was six miles from the anchorage when it encountered the *Robuste*, the *Génois*, the *Annibal* and the *Borée*. A few days later, the admiral, informed by the King of Naples that seventeen English ships had been seen at Palermo, set sail. The French squadron anchored on April 10 in the harbor of Toulon.

Rear-Admiral Cosmao-Dumanoir put to sea on April 24 with five ships and two frigates, taking twenty transports loaded with supplies for the army to Barcelona. After having brought his convoy into the port, he returned to Toulon where his division anchored on the 30th.²⁹²

On October 1st, Rear Admiral Allemand was sent to the island of Elba with five frigates. He anchored, on the 9th, in front of Porto-Ferrajo, embarked troops that his division was to take to Spain and left immediately to go to his destination. Having encountered strong northwest winds, Rear Admiral Allemand put in at the Hyères Islands where he received the order to put the troops ashore and return to Toulon.

The entry of the French armies into Spain, followed almost immediately by the general uprising of the population, made the position of Admiral Rosily in Cadiz very critical. The inhabitants, assembling tumultuously, demanded the destruction of the French squadron. The Captain General, Don Thomas de Morla, was not unaware that he would expose himself to serious dangers if he tried to resist the popular will; on the other hand, he did not have sufficient means to attack our squadron with the certainty of destroying it. As for Admiral Rosily, warned of General Dupont's march into Andalusia, he awaited the arrival of the French troops every day. Any bloodshed seemed to him not only useless but detrimental to our interests. Thus, on both sides, they wanted to gain time. Admiral Rosily, after some negotiations with the Captain General, separated from the Spanish ships with which ours had been involved until then and he took up position at the bottom of the harbor. Several days passed during which he received no news from the French army. The Spaniards installed cannons or mortars at all points from which our ships could be struck. Gunboats, carrying one or two twenty-four-pounders, and bombards left the port. Admiral Rosily wanted to enter [la Caraque](#) where he thought his ships would be able to repel any attack.²⁹³

The squadron had arrived about half a mile from this arsenal, when the winds, favorable until then, passed to the southeast. They blew from this direction for several days, which allowed the Spaniards to sink ships in the passes.

On the 9th, the Spaniards had twenty-five mortars and eight cannons in battery. Twenty-one gunboats and two bombards had placed themselves to the east of our ships; twenty-five gunboats and twelve bombards, supported by an eighty-gun ship, the *Prince des Asturies*, had taken up position on the side of Cadiz. At three o'clock in the afternoon, fire was opened on the French squadron, which responded vigorously. Fifteen gunboats were sunk or destroyed and twelve bombards suffered serious damage. Firing ceased at half past ten. The action recommenced the next day and lasted from eight in the morning until three in the evening. Our losses for these two engagements amounted to thirteen killed and forty-six wounded. The captain general summoned the French squadron to surrender. Admiral Rosily asked either to wait in the position he occupied, and without any act of hostility being committed on either side, until military events had decided the fate of Cadiz, or to put to sea. In the latter case he wanted the commander of the English cruise to give his word not to pursue him for four days. Don Thomas de Morla, declaring that he had no authority to negotiate, transmitted the admiral's proposals to the Junta of Seville. While awaiting the response of this assembly, which had taken the direction of the insurrectional movement in the south of Spain, new means of attack were gathered against us.²⁹⁴

Admiral Rosily had the idea of throwing himself on the Spanish squadron, anchored at the entrance to the harbor, and of leaving. The English cruise, immediately running up, would have crushed us, but perhaps a few ships would have escaped; whatever had happened, we would have succumbed with honor. The Spaniards, as if they had suspected the intention of the admiral, sank ships to the west of the position we occupied; moreover, they covered their vessels with a boom composed of masts moored on dead bodies. Soundings, carried out during the night, revealed a channel by which our squadron could reach the entrance to the harbor. The admiral, determined to go out, gave orders to his captains to this effect. The winds, passing to the west, made it impossible to carry out this project. On June 14, the captain general announced that the Junta of Seville demanded the pure and simple surrender of the squadron. Admiral Rosily could not maintain the hope of being rescued, since General Dupont, who had entered Cordoba on the 7th, had not yet appeared before Cadiz. Thinking he had done enough for the honor of arms, and wishing, on the other hand, to save the lives of four thousand sailors, he surrendered. Such was the fate of the five vessels that escaped the disaster of Trafalgar. The *Atlas*, which remained at Vigo, suffered the same fate as the vessels of Cadiz. Let us say immediately that the conduct of Admiral Rosily was approved by the Emperor.²⁹⁵

II

After having indicated the principal maritime events, which occurred during the course of the year 1808, we must now speak of the particular engagements. The frigates the *Italienne* of forty-four and the *Sirène* of forty-two, captains Méquet and Duperré, left Lorient, on January 17, to go to the Antilles where they carried some soldiers and supplies. After having fulfilled their mission, they put to sea to return to France. On March 23, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, the two frigates, which had landed on Belle-Ile, had arrived a short distance from the island of Groix, when they were chased by the vessels *Impétueux* and *Saturne* and the forty-man frigates *Narcissus* and *Aigle*. The breeze, which was blowing fresh from the northwest, died down near the land, while it still retained some force offshore. As the enemy approached, Captains Méquet and Duperré decided to place themselves under the protection of the batteries on the island of Groix. The *Italienne*, which was leading the two vessels, took up anchor; the *Sirène* was not yet in a position to drop her anchor when she was reached by the *Impétueux* and *Aigle*. Captain Duperré responded vigorously to his two adversaries; hugging the land closely in order to keep the enemy ships offshore, he anchored at Pointe des Chats, not far from a strong battery which had already opened fire on the English.²⁹⁶

The *Impétueux* and the *Aigle* sailed away. As the tide dropped, the *Sirène* ran aground; she was refloated the next day, and a few days later, the two frigates entered Lorient. The *Sirène* had two killed and a few wounded, three of them seriously. The English frigate was forced to change her bowsprit and foremast; she had twenty-two wounded, including the captain and an officer. The *Italienne* and the *Sirène* had captured, during their campaign, two English merchant ships as well as two privateers, each with sixteen guns and eighty-three crewmen.

The frigates *Hermione* and *Hortense*, after having fulfilled the same mission as the *Italienne* and the *Sirène*, returned to Rochefort, having captured fifteen merchant ships. The frigates *Thémis* and *Pénélope*, during a cruise of sixty-five days, took or sank seventeen merchant ships. On March 17, the brig *Griffon*, chased near Martinique by three frigates, dropped anchor in the harbor of Marin. On the 27th, several enemy ships appeared in front of the bay and cannonaded the French brig. Unable to silence the batteries defending the anchorage, the English had them attacked by a detachment of sailors and marines. These batteries, which were manned by only a small number of men, were evacuated. The English boats then headed for the *Griffon*, but this brig, by a well-directed fire, forced them to put to sea with very significant losses.²⁹⁷

The brigs *Palinure* and *Pilade*, captains Jance and Cocherel, armed with fourteen twenty-four carronades and two six-pounder guns, were chased, on April 22, near Marie-Galante, in the Caribbean Sea, by a corvette and a brig. The corvette carried eighteen six-pounder guns and eight twelve-pounder carronades, and the brig two twelve-pounder guns and twelve eighteen-pounder carronades. Around ten o'clock in the morning, the *Palinure* and *Pilade* engaged in a very lively fight with the corvette. As the English brig approached and several ships appeared on the horizon, our ships moved away, leaving their adversary with serious damage. In the afternoon, the *Pilade* exchanged a few cannonballs with the brig, but the two French ships, not wanting to expose themselves to being taken by a frigate and a second brig, which were barely a few miles away, set sail for Les Saintes where they anchored at six o'clock in the evening. The *Palinure* had four men killed and fifteen wounded and the *Pilade* four men killed and six wounded. The captain of the *Palinure* was among the wounded. The English corvette, which had been hit mainly in its mast, had only one man killed and four wounded.

The corvette the *Département-des-Landes*, captain Raoul, carrying sixteen twenty-four carronades and twelve six-pounder guns, encountered, on September 29, in sight of Guadeloupe, the English brig, *Maria*, armed with twelve eighteen-pounder carronades and two four-pounder guns. The English captain went with great boldness to meet the French corvette. After a very short engagement, within pistol range, the brig, completely disabled, lowered its flag. It had lost, besides its captain, five men; nine others were wounded. The officer who took command of the *Maria* ran ashore and got on the level.²⁹⁸

The English ship was on the point of sinking; however, it was able to be raised and taken to Fort-de-France. The corvette *Département-des-Landes* touched at Martinique and returned to our ports.

On October 3, 1808, the brig *Palinure*, Captain Jance, carrying fourteen twenty-four carronades and two six-pounder cannons, was cruising sixty leagues northeast of Martinique when it encountered the English brig *Carnation*, armed with sixteen thirty-two carronades and two six-pounder cannons. The fight began immediately. After a cannonade that lasted an hour and a half, the *Palinure* boarded the English brig and took it. Captain Jance, sick with yellow fever, had been carried to the deck; unable to act, he had been replaced by Ensign Simon Huguet. The *Carnation* had ten killed and twenty-nine wounded, fifteen of whom were mortally wounded. The *Palinure's* losses were fifteen men killed or wounded. The brave Captain Jance died the day after the glorious battle fought by his ship. The *Palinure* and its prize dropped anchor in the harbor of Marin, Martinique. A few days later, the *Palinure* was heading for the bay of Fort-de-France, with a makeshift mast, when it was sighted by the *Circe*. Before it had the opportunity to place itself under the protection of a battery established at Pointe Salomon, it was joined by this frigate. Captain Huguet did not back down from such a disproportionate fight. He expected that the breeze, when it got up, would allow it to approach land. This hope not being realized, he had the flag lowered. Of the seventy-nine men who made up the crew of the *Palinure* at that time, seven were killed and eight wounded.²⁹⁹

The *Circe* had one man killed and one wounded. Ensign Huguet deserved a better fate.

Some time later, the events of the war placed the crew of the *Carnation* in the hands of the English. A court martial was convened at the end of 1809 to judge the survivors of this battle, the outcome of which had very seriously wounded the pride of our adversaries. Lieutenant Gregory, who commanded the *Carnation*, had been killed and his officers wounded before the surrender of this vessel. The council paid a just tribute of praise to the memory of Captain Gregory and honorably acquitted the officers. The crew, accused of not having done their duty, did not have the same fortune. A sergeant of the marine infantry and thirty-one sailors or soldiers were declared guilty; the council sentenced the latter to fourteen years of transportation to Botany Bay and the sergeant to capital punishment. This non-commissioned officer was hanged from the foremast yard of the *Ulysses*, a vessel belonging to the Antilles station.

The forty-man frigate, the *Thétis*, captain Pinsum, left Lorient on November 10, around six o'clock in the evening, bound for Martinique where she was carrying some soldiers, provisions and ammunition. As soon as she had rounded the northern tip of the island of Groix, she was spotted by the forty-man frigate the *Amethyst*. The latter set off in pursuit, launching rockets to indicate to her convicts the direction she was taking. At half-past nine the two ships attacked each other, within pistol range, with great vivacity. At ten o'clock the mizzenmast of the *Amethyst* fell, breaking the rudder and covering the quarterdeck with its debris. The *Thetis* had scarcely moved away when her mizzenmast fell.³⁰⁰

The *Amethyst* joined the *Thetis* and the fight recommenced. Boarding arrangements were made on board the French frigate, but the enemy's grapeshot, wreaking great havoc among the men assembled on deck, made the execution of this plan impossible. At half past midnight, the *Thetis* lowered her colours; at the same time her mainmast and foremast fell overboard. It was difficult to push the resistance further. The *Thetis* had one hundred and thirty-four dead and one hundred and two wounded. Captain Pinsum, killed during the action, had been replaced by Lieutenant Dédé. All the officers, with the exception of three, were among the dead. Shortly after the surrender of the French frigate, the ship *Triumph* and the frigate *Shannon* arrived at the scene of the battle. The *Amethyst* had nineteen killed and fifty-one wounded; her damage was considerable. The *Thétis* carried twenty-eight eighteen-pounder guns, six eight-pounders and six thirty-six carronades. The *Amethyst* was armed with twenty-six eighteen-pounder guns, four nine-pounders and twelve thirty-two carronades.

On November 10, the frigates *Junon* and *Amphitrite* and the brigs *Papillon* and *Cygne* left Cherbourg for the Antilles. Lieutenant Menouvrier Defrènes, commanding the *Cygne*, separated from his division. On December 11, surprised by the calm, after landing on Martinique, he dropped anchor in the cove of Céron. On the 12th, a frigate and several brigs took up position at the opening of the bay. Three boats, belonging to these vessels, headed, by dint of oars, towards the *Cygne* and boarded it with determination. The result did not match the bravery of the attackers.³⁰¹

One boat was captured and another sunk; the third, although badly damaged, managed to reach the open sea. The enemy had eighteen men killed or drowned, twenty-two wounded and left seventeen prisoners in our hands. The next day, at daybreak, the *Cygne* headed for the harbor of Saint-Pierre, following the land very closely; poorly steered by its pilot, it touched down on a rocky bank and was wrecked. Captain Menouvrier Defrènes, unable to refloat his ship, exposed to fire from several enemy ships, reached land with his crew. In these two engagements which brought the greatest honor to Captain Menouvrier Defrènes, his officers and his crew, the *Cygne* did not lose a single man. Enemy boats boarded the French brig and set it on fire. The *Junon*, the *Amphitrite* and the *Papillon*, which had left France at the same time as the *Cygne*, arrived at their destination.

The sixteen-gun brig, the *Griffon*, captained by Gauthier, was captured on 11 May near Cuba by the corvette the *Bacchante*, carrying eighteen thirty-two-gun carronades and two nine-gun cannons. The brigs the *Serpent*, the *Requin*, the *Sylphe* and the *Espiègle* fell into enemy hands. Each of these vessels was taken by a frigate; a vessel captured the brig the *Pilade*.

The English seized Marie-Galante and the Désirade in March 1808. They failed in an attack directed, on July 3, against the part of the island of Saint-Martin which belonged to us.³⁰²

III

Rear-Admiral Linois, who had left Pondicherry on the night of July 12, 1803, as we have seen above, had arrived at the Ile-de-France on August 16. At the end of September, he received news of the resumption of hostilities from the corvette *Berceau*. The frigate *Atalante* was sent on a mission to the Persian Gulf. On October 8, Admiral Linois put to sea with the *Marengo*, which was flying his flag, the frigates *Belle-Poule*, *Sémillante* and the corvette *Berceau*. He was heading to Batavia with troops destined for the defense of the Dutch East Indies. At the beginning of the crossing, several ships, richly laden, fell into our hands. Admiral Linois rounded the point of Achem, entered the Strait of Malacca and presented himself before Bencoolen. Several English merchant ships were in the harbor; suspecting our true nationality, they cut their cables and headed for the port of Sellabar, located about two leagues to the south. The *Sémillante* and the *Berceau* followed them. Eight ships were thrown ashore and set on fire by their crews; two were captured. The French division continued its route and arrived, on December 10, at Batavia. On the 28th, Admiral Linois headed towards the China Seas, with the intention of intercepting the convoy which was to leave Canton at the beginning of the year 1804.³⁰³

On January 15, the French division, composed of the *Marengo*, Captain Vrignault, flying the flag of Admiral Linois, the frigates *Belle-Poule* and *Sémillante*, Captains Bruilhac and Motard, the corvette *Berceau*, Captain Halgan, and a Dutch brig, was in sight of Poulo-Aor. Some ships were captured. Admiral Linois learned that the convoy of the China Seas, comprising twenty-three three-masted ships and a brig, was about to leave Macao.

On February 14, at daybreak, sails were sighted; shortly after, twenty-seven ships were counted. Five detached themselves to observe us. Admiral Linois was at anchor with the *Marengo*, the *Berceau* and the Dutch brig; the frigates, carried by the current, were two leagues to leeward. At one o'clock, the ships, sent to reconnoiter us, rejoined their fleet, which immediately took up combat dispositions. Sixteen ships formed a line of battle, to leeward of which the other ships placed themselves. Admiral Linois set sail, rallied the frigates and held the wind. At five o'clock in the evening, he warned his captains that, wishing to avoid a night engagement, he would wait until the next day to attack the convoy. The English spent the night in a shack; three ships kept their lights lit. On the 15th, at daybreak, it was calm. The ships, which could be seen drawn up in line of battle, had two batteries. Three of them seemed stronger than the others. At half past seven, the convoy hoisted its colours; three ships and the brig hoisted the blue flag. Admiral Linois, since meeting the convoy, had been manoeuvring with extreme circumspection.³⁰⁴

He could not realize the real strength of the ships he had before him. He had been told of twenty-four ships and he saw twenty-seven. He wondered if, among the ships with two batteries, there were not ships of the line intended to serve as escort. At eight o'clock in the morning, the merchant fleet headed south, tacks to starboard, with a light westerly breeze, maintaining a good capacity. It was formed in two columns, the windward one comprising the ships with batteries. Admiral Linois steered at the head of the line, covering himself with sails; the wind having declined, he could only bear on the center. Towards noon, it became calm; Shortly afterwards, the French division, taking advantage of a light westerly breeze that had just risen, let it arrive at the tail of the convoy. The English, tacking, wind ahead, by the counter-march, headed towards our division. Admiral Linois, fearing to be caught between two fires, held the wind and went to meet the ships that had tacked. At noon, the *Marengo* fired the first cannon shot. The combat had lasted for about thirty minutes when Admiral Linois convinced himself that he was in the presence of superior forces maneuvering to surround him. He tacked and headed east. We had one wounded and the English one killed and one wounded.

In the convoy that was moving away, there was not a single warship. The ships with two batteries belonged to the East India Company; of the port of twelve to thirteen hundred tons, they had twenty-six eighteen-gun cannons in battery and ten eighteen-gun carronades on deck. The crew did not exceed one hundred and sixty men, and, among this number, were Chinese and Indians.³⁰⁵

Finally, the decks and batteries of these ships were cluttered, and, in the internal arrangements, the commercial question took precedence over the military question. Admiral Linois would certainly have taken control, if not of the whole, at least of the greater part of this merchant fleet, if he had taken the decision to attack it. The good attitude of the Company's ships, their military appearance, the blue flag, hoisted on board the three largest, while the others had hoisted the red flag, the sight of twenty-seven ships, when only twenty-four had been announced, such were the circumstances which had influenced his judgment. Admiral Linois remained convinced that, in this merchant fleet, there were ships of the line. He would not admit that a convoy of this importance had been sent without escort. Finally, the sight of some of these vessels, firing their two batteries, confirmed him in this opinion. The cruise, on this point, no longer offering any interest, the admiral went to Batavia. He had been joined, a few days before, by the frigate *Atalante*. Admiral Hartrinck, with two vessels and a frigate, was in the harbor of Batavia. Admiral Linois asked him to unite their forces and attempt some operation against the enemy. The Dutch admiral declined this proposal. After having, in five days, made its water and six months of provisions, the French division put to sea again. The admiral, leaving the frigates *Atalante* and *Belle-Poule* on a cruise, headed for the Ile-de-France where he arrived on April 1 with the *Sémillante* and the *Berceau*. He was joined on May 18 by the *Belie-Poule* and the *Atalante* which brought a prize, the Althea valued at five million francs.³⁰⁶

The meeting of February 15, 1804 was celebrated in England as a victory. Captain Dance, of the East India Company, who commanded the China convoy by virtue of his seniority, was the object of the greatest favors. The king ennobled him; a sword of honor was offered to him. Finally, he received large sums of money from the Company and several commercial companies. The East India Company spent no less than fifty thousand pounds sterling in gratuities distributed to the captains, officers, masters and sailors of the convoy's vessels.

The Governor General of the Ile-de-France and Reunion, General Decaen, transmitted to the Minister the report that Admiral Linois had sent him on his cruise. He accompanied it with a letter in which the conduct of the commander of the naval division was judged severely. After having taken note of these documents and heard the observations of the Minister of the Navy, disposed to defend Admiral Linois, the Emperor spoke out against the latter. He was, moreover, displeased that the admiral had not kept the *Atalante* with him. He reproached him for not having pointed out to Captain General Decaen that it was a small ship and not a frigate that should be designated to go to the Persian Gulf. Now, with one more frigate, the admiral would perhaps have decided to attack the convoy from China. "All the sea expeditions," wrote the Emperor to Vice-Admiral Decrès, "which have been undertaken since I have been at the head of the government, have always failed because the admirals see double and have discovered, I know not where, that one can wage war without running any chances. The least reproach that one can make to Admiral Linois," he added in another letter, "is to have put much too much prudence in the preservation of his cruise."³⁰⁷

Warships are not merchant ships. It is the honor that I want to preserve and not a few pieces of wood and a few men." Finally, in a last letter, relating to this affair, he said to Vice-Admiral Decrès: "Write to Linois, make him feel the full force of his fault; how erroneous is his opinion that he is the resource of the navy in the Indies. You will tell him that he lacked courage of mind, courage that I esteem most highly in a leader, that he is far from having lost in my mind from the point of view of his physical courage, that I hope that he will find, before returning to France, the opportunity to restore some brilliance to his flag. As for General Decaen, you will only discuss administrative matters with him. Do not speak of Linois except to reproach him for having detached, without reason, a frigate from his cruise." Captain Larue, commanding the *Marengo*, had arrived in France, charged with a mission for the Minister of the Navy. The Emperor, finding that this service would have been suitably fulfilled by an officer of the staff of Admiral Linois, refused to receive this captain of the ship and he gave the minister the order to send him back immediately to India.

Admiral Linois had been mistaken in supposing that there were warships in the merchant fleet before which he was withdrawing. When he learned that the China convoy had no escort, he alleged, in his defence, that the most experienced sailors could not, within gun range, distinguish a warship from a two-battery vessel of the East India Company.³⁰⁸

It is fair to say that mistakes of this kind had already been made.

On June 20, 1801, Rear-Admiral Linois set sail again with the *Marengo*, the *Atalante* and the *Sémillante*. He remained for some time cruising near the Comoros, the Maldives and south of Ceylon. In these different waters, our ships made prizes. At the beginning of September, the French division entered the Bay of Bengal; on the 18th, it appeared off the roadstead of Visigapatnam. The sixty-gun ship the *Centurion* and two large merchant ships were at anchor. The two frigates and the *Marengo* cannonaded the English ship which immediately retaliated, supported by a coastal battery. One of the merchant ships was taken captive; the other went to the plain. The fight had been going on for some time, when the *Centurion*, setting sail with her jibs and schooner sails, ran aground under the protection of the battery. It was becoming difficult to seize this vessel, even though our fire had acquired a very great superiority over his. The admiral, considering that, under these conditions, there was no advantage in prolonging the fight, ordered a ceasefire. He headed for the Isle-de-France where he arrived, on October 31, after having taken some prizes during the crossing. The *Marengo* and the *Sémillante* were knocked down in the hull. The vessel had a leak; as for the *Sémillante*, its lining was in poor condition.

Our naval forces in India were increased by a vessel, the thirty-six-ship frigate, the *Psyché*; it was a former privateer, purchased by General Decaen on behalf of the State. Command of this frigate was given to Captain Bergeret, the former commander of the *Virginie* in the battle of June 17, 1795.³⁰⁹

The *Psyché*, sent on a cruise in the Bay of Bengal, was, on February 14, 1805, near Ganjam, with two merchant ships that it had seized a few days earlier. These ships, which Captain Bergeret was preparing to send to the Ile-de-France, were completing their preparations for departure when a sail was reported. It was the forty-two-strong English frigate, the *San-Fiorenzo*. One of the captured ships headed towards land, while the *Psyché* ran offshore, accompanied by the second. This one, called the *Pigeon*, was placed under the command of Lieutenant Olivier; It had a crew of thirty-four men and was armed with six carronades and four cannons. At eight o'clock in the evening, the *San Fiorenzo* opened fire with her hunting guns. Shortly afterwards, the two frigates began, within pistol range, a fight, sustained on both sides with extreme vigor. An hour after the start of the action, Captain Bergeret, seeing that the enemy's fire was acquiring great superiority, wanted to attempt a boarding. Although the rigging was chopped, the sails in pieces and the maneuvers cut, he succeeded in throwing his frigate on the *San Fiorenzo*. The French crew, stopped by a violent musket fire, was unable to pass on board the enemy ship. The two frigates separated and the artillery fight resumed with renewed ferocity. Unfortunately, the fight, in this respect, was not equal. The *San Fiorenzo* had twenty-six eighteen-pounder guns, fourteen thirty-two-pounder carronades, and two nine-pounder guns. The armament of the *Psyché* consisted of twenty-six twelve-pounder guns, six six-pounder guns, and four thirty-six-pounder carronades.³¹⁰

At eleven o'clock, the English frigate moved away to repair the most urgent damage; around midnight, it approached the *Psyché*. The latter had more than half of its crew out of action and all its guns, with the exception of two, were dismantled; finally the *Pigeon* had disappeared. Captain Bergeret sent an officer on board the *San-Fiorenzo* with the following proposals. He agreed to surrender his frigate, but he asked that the officers be free to keep their weapons and the sailors their effects; he also wanted to spend the night, with his crew, on board the *Psyché* in order to give care to the wounded. These conditions having been accepted, the flag of the French frigate was lowered. The *San-Fiorenzo's* losses were twelve killed and twenty-six wounded. The *Psyché* had thirty-seven killed, including three officers, and eighty-seven wounded.

The frigates *Atalante* and *Belle-Poule*, sent on a cruise by Admiral Linois, returned to the Isle-de-France at the end of April 1805. The frigate *Sémillante* had been sent a month earlier to the Philippines to announce to the Governor-General that Spain was at war with England. Admiral Linois put to sea again on 22 May 1805 with *Marengo* and *Belle-Poule*. *Atalante*, which needed repairs, was to join him at False Bay at the end of September. The *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule* successively visited the harbors of Madagascar, the entrance to the Red Sea and the Maldives. On July 11, near the island of Ceylon, the division seized the ship of the East India Company, the *Brunswick*, of fifteen hundred tons and armed with thirty-six cannons. Admiral Linois, learning that the English had considerable forces in these waters, set sail for the Cape of Good Hope.³¹¹

On August 6, the French division was at 19 degrees south latitude and 81 degrees west longitude, running on port tack, with easterly winds. Around four o'clock in the afternoon, in overcast weather, sails were seen a few miles away. It was a convoy of ten ships from the East India Company, escorted by a seventy-four ship, the *Blenheim*, flying the flag of Admiral Toubridge. This merchant fleet was heading north. The *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule*, changing course, followed the English ships downwind. After a short engagement with the *Blenheim*, Admiral Linois, thinking that he could gain no advantage from this encounter, sailed away. He went to the Cape of Good Hope where he was joined by the *Atalante*. At the end of October, the three ships anchored at False Bay to take on provisions. On November 3, a gale of extreme violence threw the *Atalante* ashore. On the 10th, Admiral Linois left the Cape of Good Hope with the *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule*. Captain Gaudin Beauchêne of the *Atalante* had orders, if he could not rearm his frigate, to ask the governor for a Dutch ship of fifty guns which was at the cape without a crew. The admiral leaving him only one hundred and sixty men, he had to complete his personnel with Dutch sailors and foreigners.

The *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule* cruised on the west coast of Africa and off the coast of Saint Helena. The admiral, learning at the end of January 1806, from a neutral ship, that the Cape of Good Hope had fallen into the hands of the English, decided to return to France.³¹²

On February 17, he crossed the line for the twelfth time since leaving Brest in March 1803. On March 13, during the night, when the *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule* were at 26 degrees north latitude and 33 degrees west longitude, several sails were sighted. At daylight, seven vessels, two frigates and a corvette, commanded by Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, were in sight. The *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule* had encountered one of the two squadrons sent to search for the vessels that had left Brest on December 13, 1805, under the command of Admirals de Leissègues and Willaumez. At half-past five, the ninety-eight-strong *London*, Captain Sir Harry Neale, arrived within cannon range. The *Marengo* reduced sail and waited for the English vessel; shortly afterwards, a very lively fight, within pistol range, began between these two vessels. Admiral Linois gave his flag captain the order to board the *London*, but Sir Harry Neale, guessing this intention, moved away. The *Belle-Poule*, placed on the bow of the *London*, took part in the fight. Wishing to spare this frigate the fate that the fortune of arms reserved for the *Marengo*, Admiral Linois made the *Belle-Poule's* manoeuvre independent. The latter could not take advantage of the authorisation granted to it to sail. The forty-eight-gun frigate *Amazon*, passing the *Marengo* to leeward, headed for the *Belle-Poule*, which it reached at eight o'clock in the morning. At nine thirty minutes past nine, the *Marengo* was about to be surrounded by Sir Borlase Warren's squadron; the *Ramillies* was already firing cannonballs at it. At ten o'clock, Admiral Linois had the colours lowered; a quarter of an hour later, the *Belle-Poule* was forced to surrender.³¹³

The honour of the flag emerged safe from this affair. The mast and hull of the *Marengo*, riddled with cannon shots, most of the pieces dismantled, considerable losses in men testified to the obstinacy of the defence. The *Marengo* had sixty-three killed, including two officers, and eighty-two wounded among whom were the admiral, the flag captain and five officers. The losses of the *Belle-Poule* were relatively less. This frigate had six killed and twenty-four wounded. As for the enemy, we had not managed to do them much harm. The *London* had ten killed and twenty-two wounded and the frigate the *Amazon* four killed and five wounded.

The frigate *Atalante*, which had been thrown ashore in the Table Bay roadstead a few days before the departure of the *Marengo* and the *Belle-Poule*, had been refloated; numerous leaks having occurred, it was necessary to give up the hope of rearming this frigate. In this hypothesis, foreseen by Admiral Linois, the *Atalante* was to be replaced, as we have said, by a small Dutch vessel. It was recognized, after careful examination, that this latter vessel was not in a condition to go to sea. Captain Gaudin Beauchène sent an officer to the Isle-de-France to inform the Governor-General of his situation. He was waiting at the Cape, with the rest of his crew, for instructions from General Decaen, when the arrival of the English expedition was learned. Officers and sailors took part in the defense of the colony; all did their duty valiantly. Out of sixty men who made up the French detachment, forty were killed or wounded.³¹⁴

IV

Of the four ships that left France in 1803 with Admiral Linois, only the *Sémillante* remained; this frigate, sent to the Philippines in March 1805, arrived in Manila on May 30. Yielding to the urgent requests of the Governor General, who had no Spanish warship at his disposal, Captain Motard agreed to go to Acapulco to collect piastres of which the colony of the Philippines was completely devoid. Having learned, a few days after his departure, that English cruisers were in these waters, he anchored in the harbor of San-Yacintho, on the island of Ticao. On August 1, the *Phaeton* of thirty-eight and the corvette *Harrier* of eighteen were sighted. Captain Motard brought his frigate close to land, under the protection of a battery established at the southern tip of the bay. After an engagement of several hours with the *Sémillante*, the enemy ships moved away. Captain Motard had a second battery erected with guns taken from his ship. The English, probably thinking that a new attack would present no chance of success, disappeared. The *Phaeton* and the *Harrier* had suffered serious damage to their hulls and masts, but on each of these ships there were only two wounded. Our losses amounted to four dead and ten wounded.³¹⁵

Giving up, due to the damage to his ship, the voyage to Acapulco, Captain Motard returned to the Ile-de-France.

The *Sémillante* left, on January 27, 1806, with the *Bellone*, a thirty-four-gun privateer, to fight the *Pitt* which was cruising on the coast. Not having encountered this frigate, the two ships went to the island of Réunion from where they brought back to the Ile-de-France several merchant ships and prizes that fear of the enemy kept at anchor. A few months later, Captain Motard, returning from a new cruise, was informed that Port-Louis was blockaded by superior forces. He dropped anchor in the harbor of Saint-Paul, on the island of Réunion. This anchorage, protected by batteries, was attacked, without success, on November 11, by the *Sceptre* of seventy-four and the *Cornwallis* of forty. These two ships having left the cruise, the *Sémillante* set sail to go to the Ile-de-France. Captain Motard arrived, on November 21, at Port-Louis, with his prizes, after having exchanged, on his way, a few cannonballs with the *Dédaigneuse*.

In June 1807, the *Sémillante* was sent on a cruise in the Bay of Bengal. She returned to Port-Louis, in November, with several prizes. Captain Motard set sail again in February 1808. On March 15, he was about twenty leagues south of Ceylon when the forty-ship *Terpsichore* was sighted. After an engagement lasting more than an hour, the firing ceased and the two frigates carried out the most urgent repairs. Captain Motard, seriously wounded, had been replaced by his second in command, Lieutenant Duburquois. The rigging, masts and yards of the *Sémillante* were seriously damaged; the mizzenmast was on the point of falling.³¹⁶

The new commander, thinking that the action, if prolonged, would turn to our disadvantage, maneuvered to move away. For a few days, the two frigates remained in sight of each other. On the 21st, during the night, taking advantage of overcast weather, the French frigate took a wrong turn; by daylight, the *Terpsichore* had disappeared. During the combat, a fire had broken out on board the English frigate and explosions of the cannons had caused a certain number of victims. Also, the number of dead, on the *Terpsichore*, was twenty and that of the wounded twenty-two. On board the French frigate, there were twenty-two men out of action. The armament of the *Terpsichore* consisted of twenty-six eighteen-pounder guns, four six-pounders, and ten thirty-two-pounder carronades. The English say that, as a result of the damage to this vessel, all the deck guns, with the exception of two, had been left ashore. The *Sémillante* carried twenty-six twelve-pounder guns, ten six-pounders, and four thirty-six-pounder carronades. This frigate returned to the Isle-de-France; judged unfit to continue the campaign, it was sold to shipowners who sent it to France with a cargo of colonial goods. The *Sémillante* fortunately reached its destination.

The forty-gun frigate, the *Canonnière*, captain Bourayne, had arrived at the Ile-de-France at the beginning of 1806. Not finding Admiral Linois, captain Bourayne headed for the Cape of Good Hope where he thought he would meet the commander of the division. On April 21, the *Canonnière* was off Cape Natal, on the east coast of Africa.³¹⁷

At six o'clock in the morning, the frigate's lookouts discovered several sails. The winds were blowing from the northeast; the ships reported were staying to windward and at a great distance. The *Canonnière*, which was running south-southwest, kept close to the wind to recognize them. It was not long before thirteen ships were made out; it was a convoy of the East India Company, escorted by two ships of the line, the *Hindostan* of fifty and the *Tremendous* of seventy-four. The latter went to meet the French frigate. After making recognition signals, to which the latter did not respond, he continued the pursuit. The *Canonnière* gave chase by heading out to sea. The ship had a great advantage in speed over the French frigate; at three thirty in the afternoon, she was in her waters and within cannon range. The fight having become inevitable, Captain Bourayne resolved to begin it immediately. The frigate steered to the wind; the ship having imitated her maneuver, the two vessels found themselves abeam of each other. The action began with great vivacity. An hour later, the masts and sails of the English ship had suffered serious damage. The yard of the foremast was cut, and the foremast, hit by several projectiles, threatened to fall. The *Tremendous* let her arrive. Her captain hoped that a lucky volley, sent astern of the *Canonnière*, would make it impossible for this frigate to resist any longer. This hope was not realized; the broadside of the *Tremendous* did little harm to the *Canonnière*. This one, taking advantage of the movement of the ship's arrival, hugged the wind; having less damage to its sails than its adversary, it moved away quickly.³¹⁸

At six o'clock, the French frigate was to windward and out of range of the *Tremendous's* cannon. The convoy had come closer; one of the most advanced vessels fired a few volleys at the *Canonnière* from a great distance, which did not take the trouble to return fire. During the night, we lost sight of the English. The *Tremendous* did not have a single man hit by our fire; forty-five men on the *Canonnière* were put out of action. A cannonball penetrated the mainmast and cut the matchlock. The foremast, a large anchor and a thirty-two carronade were put out of service; finally, the frigate received twenty cannonballs in its hull.

One cannot praise too highly the composure and boldness of Captain Bourayne. In the presence of the powerful adversary that circumstances gave him, he did not despair of fortune. He resolutely entered the fight, maneuvered with skill and came out of this encounter gloriously. But it must be added that, if the gunners of the French frigate had not fired accurately and quickly, the qualities displayed by the commander could not have prevented this affair from having a disastrous outcome; that the *Tremendous* was in a position to follow the *Canonnière* and the latter succumbed in this unequal combat. Captain Bourayne gave the highest praise to the conduct of his staff. He particularly mentioned his second, Lieutenant Dubuisson, Ensigns Geoffroy and Belet and Midshipman Frédéric Bernard. Ensign Prenat and Midshipman Duplantes, seriously wounded, had returned to the deck, after having received a first dressing. "It is impossible," wrote Captain Bourayne to the minister, "to have a crew more completely brave than that of the frigate which I have the honor of commanding."³¹⁹

He did not forget the gunners whose skill he praised.

Captain Bourayne headed for the Cape of Good Hope and on the 30th he anchored in the harbor of Simon's Bay. As soon as the anchor was at the bottom, a boat, commanded by an officer, left the frigate. When the French boat reached land, the English flag replaced the Dutch colors on the forts, batteries and public buildings and a very lively fire was directed at the French frigate. The *Canonnière* cut its cable, set sail and left the bay; the enemy's projectiles had only caused it minor damage.

In the same circumstances, a French frigate was not so fortunate. The *Volontaire*, attached to Admiral Willaumez's squadron, had been sent, as we have seen above, to Sainte-Croix de Tenerife to drop off prisoners. Driven by the enemy and carried away to leeward, it could not fulfill its mission or reach the rendezvous assigned to it, off the Canaries. Captain Bretel set sail for the Cape of Good Hope, and on March 4th, he anchored in the roadstead of Table Bay. The Dutch colours were flying on the forts and at the stern of several large vessels. As soon as the *Volontaire* had dropped anchor, the English flag was hoisted on land and in the roadstead and the forts and vessels opened fire on the French frigate. The wind not being favorable to reach the open sea, the *Volontaire* lowered its colors; two hundred and seventeen English soldiers, prisoners on this frigate, thus regained their freedom.³²⁰

Leaving the Cape of Good Hope, the *Canonnière* went to the Isle of France and from there to the Philippines. At the very strong urging of the Governor General, Captain Bourayne agreed to carry out the mission that the *Sémillante* had been forced to abandon. The *Canonnière* arrived at Acapulco on July 21, 1807; she left there on October 23, and anchored on December 24 in the harbor of Manila. This frigate, which left Manila on March 28, 1808, arrived at the Isle of France on July 13. On September 12, the *Canonnière* left Port Louis to fight the *Laurel* of thirty-two which was cruising in sight of the harbor. After a very lively engagement, the English ship lowered its flag. The *Laurel* was a small frigate, carrying twenty-two nine-pounder guns, four six-pounders and six eighteen-pounder carronades. This ship, which could no longer maneuver at the end of the fight, due to damage to its masts, had only nine wounded. Our losses were greater; they amounted to five killed and nineteen wounded. The *Canonnière* and the *Laurel*, under the command of Captain Bourayne, were sent on a cruise. After an absence of seven months, these two frigates returned, having made only one capture, the small corvette the *Discovery*. The Governor General, not having the necessary means to put the *Canonnière* and the *Laurel*, which were in urgent need of repairs, back in a state to put to sea again, sold these two frigates to the merchant.

The *Piémontaise* of forty, captain Epron, arrived at the Ile-de-France, at the beginning of 1806, and was sent on a cruise to the north of the island. On June 21, she captured the *Warren Hastings*, a ship of the East India Company, which she took to Port-Louis.³²¹

The *Piedmontaise* set sail again and returned to the Isle-de-France, which she left again in December 1807 to go on a cruise. On March 6, 1808, this frigate, which was a short distance south of Ceylon, was chasing three ships of the East India Company when a sail was reported. It was the frigate *San-Fiorenzo*, the former adversary of the *Psyché*; after exchanging a few volleys during the night, the two frigates separated. On the 7th, at daybreak, they attacked each other with great vivacity. Two hours later, the firing ceased and the combatants worked to repair their damage. On the 8th, after a new engagement, the *Piedmontese*, distraught, with a large number of men out of action, lowered her flag. The *San Fiorenzo* had thirteen killed and twenty-five wounded, while the losses of the French frigate amounted to forty-nine killed and ninety-two wounded. Fifty men, on the *Piedmontese*, had been detached on board the captured vessels. Consequently, the effectives of this frigate, at the time of its surrender, were reduced by one hundred and ninety-one men. Other causes had contributed to the unfortunate outcome of this combat. A report, relating to the capture of the *Piedmontese*, signed by all the officers of this frigate, contained the following: "The locks of the pieces were almost all dismantled at the beginning of the third action; The cannon match was extremely bad, as were the squibs, to the point that they could only be used with great difficulty, reasons which considerably slowed down the fire and gave a false direction to the shots, which unfortunately only hit the rigging and sails of our adversary." The commander's report further stated that the *Piedmontese* no longer had any eighteen- or eight-pounder cannonballs.³²²

The armament of the *Piedmontaise* consisted of twenty-eight eighteen-pounder cannons, four eight-pounders and fourteen thirty-six carronades. The *San-Fiorenzo*, as we saw in her fight with the *Psyche*, carried twenty-six eighteen-pounder cannons, two nine-pounder cannons and fourteen thirty-two carronades.

The frigates *Manche* and *Caroline*, captains Dornaldeguy and *Billiard*, had arrived at the Ile-de-France in 1808, the first on March 6 and the second on April 13. These frigates were sent on a cruise. The *Caroline* appeared, on October 30, during the night, in front of the Grand-Port. Warned by signals from the coast that this point was blocked by superior forces, Captain Billiard set sail for the island of Réunion. On November 3, he anchored in the harbor of Saint-Paul, where the *Manche* arrived the same day. The two frigates entered Port-Louis at two o'clock in the morning on December 1, 1808, exchanging a few cannon shots with the sixty-four-gun *Raisonnable* and the eighteen-gun corvette *Olter*. The corvette *Iéna*, belonging to the Ile-de-France station, was captured in the Bay of Bengal by a frigate.³²³

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BOOK VIII

Admiral Willaumez leaves Brest, passes in front of Lorient and anchors at Rochefort. Combat of the frigates the *Italienne*, the *Cybèle* and the *Calypso* and of the division of Rear-Admiral Stopford. Admiral Allemand commands the Rochefort squadron. Admiral Gambier on the Basques harbor. Preparations made by the English to set fire to our squadron. Arrangements made by Admiral Allemand. Attack of April 11. Nine ships and three frigates throw themselves on the coast. Attack of April 12. The *Aquilon*, the *Ville-de-Varsovie* and the *Calcutta* fall into the hands of the English. The *Tonnerre* is given over to the flames. Temporary abandonment of the *Tourville*. Cannonade exchanged between the English and some of our ships. The *Indienne* is evacuated and burned. The ships return to the Charente. Lord Gambier is accused of not having taken sufficient advantage of the victory. Tried by a court martial, he is acquitted. Captains Lafon, Clément Laroncière, Proteau, La Caille are brought before a council of war. Sentences rendered by this council. Departure of Commander Troude for the Antilles. Capture of the ship *D'Hautpoult* and the frigates *Félicité* and *Furieuse*. The frigates *Topaze*, *Junon* and *Nièmen* fall into the hands of the enemy. Capture of the English frigate *Junon*. The *Seine* and *Loire* are evacuated and burned. Expedition of the English into the Escaut. Capture of Flushing. Retreat of the expeditionary army. Abandonment of Flushing. Capture of the English frigate *Pauline*. Exit of Rear-Admiral Baudin. The *Robuste* and the *Lion* are evacuated and given over to the flames. Ships captured by the English. Colonies fallen into the hands of the enemy. The frigates *Eliza* and *Amazone* are evacuated and burned. Special naval schools established in Brest and Toulon.

I

At the beginning of the year 1809, we had, in Lorient, a division of three vessels, at the head of which was placed Commander Troude. Captain Bergeret, who replaced, on a temporary basis, Rear-Admiral Hermitte, who had fallen ill, was in Rochefort with a few vessels. Lord Gambier, who was blockading Brest, had sent, in front of Lorient, Captain Beresford with three vessels.³²⁴

Four ships, under the command of Rear-Admiral Stopford, were watching the port of Rochefort. Rear-Admiral Willaumez, who commanded the Brest squadron, was ordered to put to sea as soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself. He was to unblock Lorient, join the division of Commander Troude, if this junction could be made without any loss of time, and head for Rochefort. Rear-Admiral Willaumez, immediately joined by the division anchored in the harbor of the island of Aix, would have left for the Antilles; troops and supplies were embarked on the ships of Brest, Lorient and Rochefort.

On February 21, at daybreak, Rear-Admiral Willaumez left Brest with the *Océan* of one hundred and twenty, on which he had his flag, the *Foudroyant* of eighty-six, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Gourdon, and the ships of eighty-two the *Cassard*, *Tonnerre*, *Jean-Bart*, *Regulus*, *Tourville* and *Aquilon*. Our squadron was sighted by the ship *Revenge* which immediately headed south. In the afternoon, Admiral Gourdon's division chased away the ships blockading Lorient; Captain Beresford, warned of our presence by the signals of the *Revenge*, was racing, under full sail, in a westerly direction. Admiral Willaumez, realizing the futility of pursuit, recalled his ships. Instead of continuing his route, as his instructions prescribed, Admiral Willaumez stood near the island of Groix, waiting for the Lorient division. When it did not appear, he headed for Rochefort in the evening of the 22nd.³²⁵

At ten o'clock in the evening our ships were sighted by the *Amethyst*; informed of our presence by the signals of this frigate, the blockade squadron headed out to sea. On the 24th, at daybreak, Admiral Willaumez appearing on the roadstead of Basques, gave the order to the division, anchored on the roadstead of the island of Aix, to join him. The latter remained motionless. Shortly afterwards, a notice brought the admiral a letter from Captain Bergeret containing the following passage: "I will now set sail as quickly as possible to range myself under your flag, but it can only be more slowly than I would like, because, a terrible epidemic having affected the squadron for a month, it is almost entirely disarmed." One can imagine the surprise of Admiral Willaumez, warned by the minister that the Rochefort squadron, kept in readiness, would set sail as soon as he appeared. Admiral Willaumez dropped anchor in the Basques harbor. Rear-Admiral Stopford, who had resumed his observation post, sent the *Naiad* off Ouessant to inform Lord Gambier of the arrival at Rochefort of the Brest squadron. This frigate, barely a few miles away, made known by signal that it had sighted three ships coming from the north. Admiral Stopford, leaving two frigates to monitor the movements of Admiral Willaumez, covered himself with sails to join the *Naiad*.

On February 21 and 22, the water had not risen to a sufficient height in the Lorient passes to allow ships to put to sea. On the 23rd, at daybreak, Commander Troude had the *Italienne*, *Cybèle* and *Calypso* of forty-four set sail, captains Jurien, Jacob and Cocault. Having recognized the impossibility of going out with his ships, he gave the three frigates, which were waiting for him offshore, the order to go to their destination.³²⁶

Captain Jurien of the *Italienne*, who had command of this division, headed for Rochefort, keeping close to land. During the day, he learned of Captain Beresford's division, which was heading for Lorient. A frigate and a corvette, having left Quiberon Bay, kept a short distance behind the *Cybèle*, which was placed at the tail of the line. On the 24th, the three frigates had arrived in sight of the Baleine tower when Rear-Admiral Stopford's division, called, as we have seen above, by the signals of the *Naiade*, appeared. Thus the road to Rochefort was barred; on the other hand, in returning back, the French frigates were to meet the ships of Captain Beresford. Commander Jurien headed for the Sables-d'Olonne harbour. The *Cybele*, remaining a little behind, was on the point of being cut off by the frigate and the corvette which were observing us, when the *Italienne*, tacking, freed her. At half-past nine, the three frigates, dropping anchor in the Sables harbour, took the necessary measures to present the broadside to the enemy. The French division was closely followed by the *Caesar* of eighty, bearing the flag of Admiral Stopford, the *Defiance* and the *Donegal*, of seventy-four, and the frigate the *Amelia*. The captain of the *Defiance*, with a boldness which might have had serious consequences for his vessel, anchored within pistol range by the davit of the *Italienne*. The *Caesar* and the *Donegal*, keeping under sail, attacked the first the *Cybele* and the second the *Calypso*. A very vigorous action immediately began between our ships and the three English vessels, which were soon joined by the frigate *Amelia*.³²⁷

The fighting was so close that the salvos of the *Defiance* set fire several times on board the *Italienne*; the position of this frigate would have been very critical if its adversary had had better fire, but most of the shots from the English ship hit the masts. An hour after the start of the action, the frigates, whose cables had been cut by the enemy's projectiles, were brought to the coast; having maintained, by running aground, a favorable position, they were able to continue their fire. At noon, the sea beginning to drop, the English division withdrew. The *Defiance*, obliged, in order to sail, to pay her bill, came to the call of her cable and presented her stern to our ships. She received, in the stern, several volleys which caused her serious damage; her retreating guns, the only ones she could use in the position she occupied, ceased firing. The mizzen-head, cut by the cannonballs, having dragged the flag down in its fall, repeated cries of Long live the Emperor were heard. The commander of the *Italienne* was on the point of sending a boat on board the *Defiance* to take the captain, when this vessel re-hoisted her colours. The *Defiance*, which was manoeuvring to rally her division, found herself, for a moment, in a very critical position. If she should bear towards the land, she would run aground and remain, in all probability, in our hands; the *Caesar*, the *Donegal* and the *Amelia*, which were already far away, could no longer protect her. Her foretopsail, whose halyard had just been cut by a cannonball, having fallen back on the chandle, the crews of the three frigates made fresh cheers heard.³²⁸

It seemed that the English ship must inevitably succumb; but fortune did not abandon the bold captain of the *Defiance*. This vessel bore away to the open sea, dropped its foresail and moved away, after having sent a very well-directed volley at the *Calypso*. Our losses amounted to twenty-four killed and fifty-one wounded. The *Italienne* had six killed and seventeen wounded; the *Calypso* ten killed and eighteen wounded and the *Cybele* eight killed and sixteen wounded. According to the English reports, the *Caesar* suffered serious damage to her hull and mast, but she did not lose a man; the *Donegal* had one man killed and six wounded and the *Defiance* two killed and twenty-five wounded. The land batteries had fired a few cannon shots, but, manned by inexperienced personnel, they had done no harm to the enemy. The frigates could not remain in the harbor of Sables d'Olonne, which offered them no shelter from the offshore winds; moreover, the damage they had suffered during the combat did not allow them to set sail. The *Italienne* and the *Cybèle*, after having lightened themselves, entered the small port of Sables; the *Calypso*, which had thrown itself ashore, could not be raised. Rear-Admiral Stopford, rallied the next day by Captain Beresford, established himself on a cruise outside Chassiron.

Admiral Willaumez, as has been said above, had anchored on the 24th in the Basques roadstead; he was joined the same day at eight o'clock in the evening by Captain Bergeret's division, comprising the *Patriote*, the *Cassard* and the *Jemmapes*. The greater part of the personnel had been embarked during the day, and on none of these vessels was there a combat role. In view of the time which had elapsed since his departure from Brest, the admiral supposed that he would find on his route the united forces of Lord Gambier, Rear-Admiral Stopford and Captain Beresford.³²⁹

Under these conditions, it seemed imprudent to him to go out with eleven ships, of which three, those of Rochefort, were not in a condition to fight. He therefore made the decision not to go to the Antilles; fearing, on the other hand, that if he remained in the roadstead of the Basques, he would be attacked by superior forces, he led his ships to the roadstead of the island of Aix. In making this move, the *Jean-Bart* threw itself on the *Palles* and could not be raised.

II

On March 10, 1809, Rear Admiral Allemand, who served as a subordinate in the Toulon squadron, was called to command the ships anchored in the harbor of the island of Aix. Arriving at Rochefort on the 15th, and appointed vice-admiral on the 16th, he took command of the squadron on the 17th and set his flag on the *Ocean*. Rear Admiral Willaumez and Captain Bergeret, the first in command of the Brest squadron and the second of the Rochefort division, were called to Paris to report on their conduct. Admiral Allemand had his squadron anchored in two lines, separated by an interval of two hundred and fifty meters; in each line, the direction was north-quarter-northeast and south-quarter-southwest. The distance between the vessels was one cable length. The *Calcutta* and the *Elbe*, which were placed in front, the *Calcutta* in the first line and the *Elbe* in the second, raised the island of Aix, in the north, at three and a half cables.³³⁰

Our ships had two anchors at sea, one in the northwest and the second in the southeast. Three frigates were anchored seven hundred meters off the first line. Consequently, the squadron was arranged as follows:

*Indienne . Hortense . Pallas .
Foudroyant . Warsaw . Ocean . Regulus . Cassard . Calcutta .
Tonnerre . Patriote . Jemmapes . Aquilon . Tourville . Elbe .*

The second line was very close to the shallows. All the ships, by bending over, were in a position to lend a beam to ships coming from the open sea. In these conditions, supported by the fortifications of the island of Aix, placed too close to land to be turned, the squadron was especially able to repel a strong attack. The day that Admiral Allemand took command of the Rochefort squadron, that is to say on March 17, Lord Gambier arrived in the Basque harbor with thirteen ships. A few days later, the *Defiance*, which had figured in the battle of Sables d'Olonne, and the *Triumph*, charged with escorting it, left for England. The enemy squadron was about nine miles from ours. Lord Gambier, fearing that Admiral Allemand would have the idea of setting fire to his ships, established a very active surveillance; two boats, per ship, intended to ward off the fire ships, were sent, each evening, on board the commander of the vanguard. The English ships had orders to be ready to sail by casting their cables, on which buoys were placed.³³¹

A few days before anchoring in the Basque roadstead, Lord Gambier had written to England that an attack, directed against the French squadron, with fire ships, seemed to him to present the greatest chances of success. This opinion was shared by the English government, which, since the first days of March, had been making preparations to attempt this operation. Twelve ships, transformed into fire ships, five bombards and a vessel, carrying rockets to the Congrève, were about to leave for the Basque roadstead. Lord Cochrane, who commanded the frigate l'Impérieuse, consulted by the First Lord of the Admiralty on the possibility of destroying the Rochefort squadron with the aid of fire ships and incendiary machines, declared himself the convinced supporter of this project. Designated to cooperate in its execution, he set sail, with his frigate, to join Lord Gambier. This admiral was to attack the Rochefort squadron immediately after being joined by the ships that were available in England. Complete freedom of action was left to him; he could act either with the fleet, or with the fire ships, or by using both means. Admiral Gambier's choice was made; a strong attack did not seem to him to present any favorable chance. While awaiting the arrival of the ships announced by the admiralty, he had the *Mediator*, a frigate armed as a flute, converted into fire ships, as well as eight transports, taken from the thirty that, at that moment, accompanied his squadron. Three ships, intended to explode, were arranged under the particular direction of Lord Cochrane.

Vice-Admiral Allemand, beginning to realize the dangers his squadron was running, wrote to the minister on the 23rd: "I could be very worried if the English sent me several fireships at once."³³²

In the same letter, he informed Admiral Decrès that he intended to cover his ships with a jetty and to assemble a flotilla "which could go to meet the fire ships and divert them." Admiral Allemand sent the maritime prefect of Rochefort, Vice-Admiral Martin, a first request for material objects, anchors, hawsers, floating wood, on March 24, and a second, the following day 25. On March 31, he had received nothing; very worried, sensing the dangers that threatened him, he wrote to Admiral Martin: "For the interest of His Majesty's squadron, monsieur le préfet, please repeat your orders. My position requires that I ask you to order that the port does not sleep, that everything be sent to me; I will also need time to put everything in place and I will be able to do so at present with a tide as strong as this one. Help me therefore with the means of the port. If you could install, in haste, a couple of bombards, they would be useful to me." On April 3, Admiral Allemand received five anchors, some riggings and part of the wood and rough ironwork intended for the installation of cannons, carronades and swivel guns in the boats. Now, the request, to which this shipment of material related, was dated March 24. On April 8, the jetty, formed of riggings supported by buoys, was completed; placed eight hundred meters forward of our first line, it extended over a length of sixteen hundred meters. Admiral Allemand wrote to the minister on the 9th that he was asking the maritime prefect of Rochefort for the necessary equipment to build a second jetty inside the first. The flotilla consisted of seventy-three boats; the port having provided only a very small part of the equipment that had been requested, Admiral Allemand had had recourse to the squadron.³³³

The ships and frigates had provided anchors and almost all their boats; the ships' longboats carried a thirty-six-pounder cannon, a carronade of the same caliber, and four swivel guns. The large boats were armed with a thirty-six-pounder carronade and four swivel guns; the other boats had four blunderbusses. Admiral Allemand had the topgallant masts extended, the topmasts braced, and the useless sails unfurled; only the vanguard frigates retained their full masts. In the event of an attack, carried out with fireships, the position of the French squadron presented very weak points. Our anchorage extending from the southern tip of the island of Aix to the northern tip of Les Palles, the flood current and the northwest winds were to push the incendiary vessels onto the squadron. Burning barrels of tar, which the English had abandoned, at the moment when the flood current was at its strongest, had arrived on our vessels. Now, these, which were berthed southeast and northwest, that is to say following the direction of the current, could astern but not disappear. The admiral having had the topmasts heaved and part of the sails unfurled, all thought of casting off disappeared. The vessels and frigates, having given their large boats for the organization of the flotilla, and part of their anchors for the installation of the jetty, found themselves deprived of important means of action. Finally, the *Indienne*, the *Hortense* and the *Pallas*, placed at the head of the squadron, were to hinder the ships' firing on the incendiary vessels directed against our lines.³³⁴

Lord Gambier, successively joined by various ships, frigates, corvettes, bombards and gunboats, had, under his command, on April 9, the *Caledonia* of one hundred and twenty, the *Caesar*, the *Gibraltar* and the *Hero*, of eighty, the *Donegal*, the *Resolution*, the *Theseus*, the *Valiant*, the *Illustrious*, the *Bellona* and the *Revenge*, of seventy-four, the frigates the *Indefatigable*, the *Impérieuse*, the *Aigle*, the *Emerald*, the *Unicorn* and the *Pallas*, five gunboats, two bombards, six brigs, a schooner and two cutters. On April 10, the twelve fireships expected from England having anchored in the Basques harbor, Lord Gambier made arrangements for an immediate attack. During the day of the 11th, the frigate *Impérieuse*, commanded by Lord Cochrane, dropped anchor a short distance from Boyard Rock. The frigates *Aigle*, *Unicorn* and *Pallas*, responsible for receiving the crews of the fireships, anchored to the northwest of *Impérieuse*. The bombard *Etna* took up position to the northwest of the island of Aix, under the protection of the frigate *Indefatigable* and the corvette *Foxhound*. The English squadron set sail, but having been unable to maintain good order due to the strength of the current, it returned to its anchorage. At eight thirty in the evening, two hours after the flood had begun, the order was given to the fireships to sail; these, twenty-one in number, cut their cables and headed for the jetty, preceded by the three ships intended to explode. The weather was dark and squally, the wind very strong and the sea rough. Admiral Allemand had ordered, in the afternoon, two divisions of the flotilla to be at the jetty at eight o'clock in the evening, and, at five forty-five, he had signaled the army for freedom of maneuver.³³⁵

A first explosion, followed quickly by others, was heard around nine-thirty. The jetty was breached, and the fireships, entering the harbor, advanced toward our squadron, pushed by the wind and current. Admiral Allemand signaled the longboats and boats to sail out to sea "to hook the fireships, push them away, and sink them." By the time he gave this order, each ship had already sent most of its boats to the jetty. Our boats, overloaded with artillery, were, moreover, unable to fight against the wind, the sea, and the current. The frigates, positioned at the front of the ships, which had begun to fire on the fireships, set sail. The *Ocean*, having two fireships in front of her which were about to engage her bowsprit, paid out her cable from the northwest and put her topgallant on the mast. As she was not moving away fast enough, the order was given to cut the cable; shortly after, the *Ocean*, boarded by a burning fireship, cut her second cable. The flagship would have been in a very critical position, if Ensign Allary, who commanded a boat from the *Tonnerre*, had not managed to tow this fireship out to sea. The *Ocean* headed towards the entrance to the Charente under her jibs and foresail, but this sail being insufficient to control the current, she ran aground at ten o'clock on the Palles. A fire started on board the *Regulus* which had been caught by a burning fireship. Captain Lucas managed to free himself, but the two cables having been successively cut, the vessel, carried by the wind and the current, approached the land. It was, at the moment it anchored, on the Banc des Palles; the sea falling rapidly, the *Regulus* ran aground before an anchor had been let out.³³⁶

The *Cassard* cut its cables, but having dropped an anchor very quickly, it remained afloat; Captain Faure immediately had the masts hoisted, the yards crossed, and the sails set. The fireships passed off the *Foudroyant*; Rear Admiral Gourdon ordered his flag captain to be ready to sail. The *Ville-de-Varsovie*, threatened by the fireships, cut its cables, then dropped an anchor. Forced, by the approach of a new fireship, to cut his cable once more, Captain Cuvillier anchored as soon as his ship was out of danger; Finding himself near the banks, he hoisted his masts, set his sails and set sail at two o'clock in the morning. Shortly after weighing anchor, the *Ville-de-Varsovie* touched and remained aground. The *Calcutta*, which was anchored at the head of the ships in the first line, cut its northwest cable at ten o'clock in the evening, and its southeast cable shortly after; carried by the wind and the current, it touched at around eleven o'clock on the Palles. Captain Lafon dropped a davit anchor. The launch being under repair and the large boats having been sent to the jetty, it was not possible to drop an anchor offshore. The sea was still rising; when the ship floated, Captain Lafon set sail under the jibs, the staysails of the mainmast, the topgallant and the mizzen. He took the starboard tack with winds from the north to north-northeast, heading for the harbor. Hardly had this movement begun than the ship came back into the wind, masked and ran aground further on the bank than the first time. After anchoring, Captain Lafon gave the order to lighten the *Calcutta*.³³⁷

Thus, of the six vessels making up the first line, four were stranded on the Palles. The *Tonnerre*, captained by Clément Laroncière, cut its northwest cable to avoid the *Ocean*, which was about to hit it; shortly after, it cut the southeast cable to free itself from the *Patriote* and the *Ocean*, which had fallen upon it. At eleven o'clock, the *Tonnerre* touched on the Palles; this vessel, having no boat, was unable to drop anchor to tow itself out to sea. The *Jemmapes*, with fireships in front of it, cut its cables and then anchored; this vessel was maneuvering to enter the Charente when it ran aground on the Palles. The *Aquilon*, Captain Maingon, cut its cables to avoid the *Regulus*; it dropped an anchor when it was out of danger, but having set sail during the night to get away from land, it ran aground. The *Patriote* cut its cables to free itself from the *Ocean* and the *Tonnerre* with which it was colliding; carried by the current, it ran aground on the Palles. The *Tourville*, collided by the *Indienne*, threatened by several fireships, cut the northwest cable; shortly after it cut the southeast one to avoid the *Regulus* and ran aground on the Palles. The frigates shared the fate of most of the vessels. The *Elbe* ran aground at ten o'clock in the evening; this frigate anchored, quickly lightened, set sail and reached the port of Basques during the night. The *Hortense* and the *Pallas* ran aground near Madame Island, the former at ten o'clock in the evening, and the latter at three in the morning. As for the *Indienne*, she ran aground near Ennette Island at ten thirty in the evening.

It is difficult to pronounce on the conduct of the French captains on the night of April 11.³³⁸

1

Before passing judgment, one should know exactly what difficulties they encountered. One is inclined to believe that most of them waited too long to anchor; but, in light of events, one hesitates to maintain this observation. How, indeed, can one be surprised that ships, forced to cut their cables to avoid hostile fireships, ran aground, when the squadron had intentionally anchored near the banks?

III

When day broke, the *Foudroyant* and the *Cassard* were alone in the harbor. The fireships, grounded at various points, were finishing burning; not one of our ships had been hit. Although this result constituted a failure for the English, our situation was nonetheless serious. Three frigates and nine ships were on the coast; most of these vessels were far from the island of Aix, that is to say, from any support. If the enemy, maneuvering with his usual boldness, entered the harbor, the French squadron would be in serious danger. It was therefore necessary to make the greatest haste in refloating our ships, but already the imperfect organization of the defense was making itself felt. Some ships were still waiting for their boats, sent the day before to the jetty; others no longer had anchors. At six o'clock in the morning, Admiral Allemand signaled that he was leaving each captain free to maneuver for the safety of his ship.³³⁹

The English squadron set sail on the morning of the 12th; the wind was blowing very fresh from the north and the tide was at its strongest. Admiral Gambier, deciding not to attack our ships, anchored about three miles from the flagstaff of the Île d'Aix. However, he ordered the bombardier *Etna* and the gunboats *Insolent*, *Conflict*, and *Growler* to enter the harbor and open fire on the grounded ships. The *Valiant*, *Bellona*, and *Revenge*, along with the frigates and corvettes, anchored between the main body of the English fleet and the French vessels grounded on the Palles. While the enemy was carrying out these various movements, the *Ocean*, *Regulus*, *Patriote*, and *Jemmapes* managed to refloat. Faced with the attack being prepared by the English, it seems that Admiral Allemand should have joined the *Foudroyant* and the *Cassard* with the four refloated vessels. If he returned to the Charente, he would have abandoned to the enemy the vessels that had not yet managed to refloat. He decided on the latter course. Consequently, the *Foudroyant* and the *Cassard* were ordered to sail; upon reaching the passes, these two vessels ran aground. This misfortune was shared by the *Ocean*, the *Regulus*, the *Patriote*, and the *Jemmapes*; nevertheless, these six vessels approached the entrance.

The frigate *Impérieuse* was anchored near Boyard Rock; His captain, Lord Cochrane, was following our movements with the greatest attention. He was surprised that the commander-in-chief of the British fleet did not take advantage of the bad position in which our ships found themselves to deal them a decisive blow.³⁴⁰

Lord Cochrane set sail, although Lord Gambier had not given him the order, and headed towards the *Etna*, the *Insolent*, the *Conflict*, and the *Growler*, the only ships that had entered the harbor of the Île d'Aix. Shortly after setting sail, Lord Cochrane signaled Admiral Gambier the following: "The enemy is under sail; the enemy is superior to the hunters; finally, the hunters are requesting assistance." At two o'clock, the *Impérieuse* began to cannonade the *Calcutta*, on which the *Etna* and the gunboats had opened fire. Lord Gambier had the *Impérieuse* supported by the frigates, corvettes, and small vessels of the British fleet. The *Valiant*, the *Revenge* and the *Theseus*, passing out of range of the batteries of the island of Aix and the point of Saumonard, anchored when they were in position to fight the *Calcutta*, the *Aquilon* and the *Ville-de-Varsovie*. Sixteen English ships, arranged in a curved line, in the shape of a crescent, concentrated their fire on these three vessels. The arrival of the enemy did not allow Captains Lafon, Cuvillier and Maingon to continue the work they had begun to refloat their ships. The *Aquilon* and the *Ville-de-Varsovie*, having their bows on the landward side, replied with their retreating guns; the *Calcutta*, which presented its bow to the open sea, replied with its hunting guns to the enemy's fire. The captain of the *Ville-de-Varsovie*, foreseeing that he could not prolong his resistance for long, was concerned with saving his crew; At about three thirty, he sent his boats loaded with people ashore. This beginning of the evacuation caused great discouragement on board the *Calcutta*, the ship closest to the enemy. The sailors, passing through the gun ports and the shrouds, threw themselves into the boats; they were already pushing out to sea when officers arrived, sent by the commander, who ordered them to re-board the *Calcutta*.³⁴¹

As the crew persisted in their intention to reach land, Captain Lafon embarked in his boat to force the departing vessels to turn back. He had with him his second in command, Lieutenant Sergent, who went into the boat to restore order. Seeing the morale of his men weakened, and believing, moreover, that he could not resist the superior forces with which his ship was engaged, Captain Lafon determined to abandon his vessel. His second in command reboarded the *Calcutta*, had it evacuated, and set it on fire. Wounded in the thigh and arm, Captain Lafon did not leave his boat. When Lieutenant Sergent returned, announcing that the orders given by the captain had been carried out, the boats of the *Calcutta* joined the ship of the Amiral Allemand. We have seen that the captain of the *Ville-de-Varsovie* had sent his boats ashore with part of his crew. At five o'clock, the boats of this ship had not returned. The *Ville-de-Varsovie* had suffered greatly; the stern was demolished and the port side riddled with projectiles. The flag was lowered. The *Aquilon* alone remained exposed to the fire of the English. The boats of this ship, after taking on as many men as they could carry, headed for land. When they had moved away, Captain Maingon had the flag lowered. Three hundred men still remained on the *Aquilon*. The *Tonnerre* ran aground during the night of April 11-12. If it had been able to drop an anchor offshore, it would have easily refloated; unfortunately, none of its boats had returned.³⁴²

On the 12th, at seven o'clock in the morning, there was only seven and a half feet of water around the vessel. The longboat having returned, Captain Clément Laroncière had anchors let out and made the necessary arrangements to refloat his ship. Around eight o'clock, the *Tonnerre* burst and was flooded. The successive capture of the vessels *Calcutta*, *Ville-de-Varsovie*, and *Aquilon* allowed the English to direct their fire on the *Tonnerre*, which they had not yet engaged. At five thirty, Captain Clément Laroncière signaled to the commander-in-chief for permission to evacuate the crew and abandon his ship. The *Ocean* responded to this signal with a survey. The men disembarked on the rocky point that connects, at low tide, with Madame Island, and the ship was given over to the flames. The *Tonnerre* exploded at 7:30 and the *Calcutta* an hour later. A boat from the *Impérieuse* had gone aboard the latter vessel shortly after it had been abandoned, and had hoisted the English flag.

The enemy's losses were very light; they affected only two ships, the *Revenge* and the *Impérieuse*. The former had three killed and fifteen wounded, and the latter three killed and eleven wounded. The English attributed the *Revenge's* losses to fire from the batteries on the Ile d'Aix. The *Aquilon* lost few men; its commander had taken the precaution of sending, to the false deck and the hold, the men who were not needed to man the guns. Captain Maingon had just left the *Aquilon* in Lord Cochrane's boat, next to whom he was sitting, when his head was blown off by a cannonball, probably fired from the *Tonnerre* which was on fire at the time.³⁴³

The English say that the number of killed and wounded aboard the *Ville-de-Varsovie* was no less than one hundred. The *Calcutta* had twelve wounded; its crew was 230 men. During the night, the English set the *Ville-de-Varsovie* and the *Aquilon* ablaze. The number of prisoners taken on these two vessels was 650.

The *Tourville* had been unable to refloat during the day of April 12. Having a small number of boats, and fearing, on the other hand, that he would find himself in difficulty if the need arose to quickly evacuate the vessel, Captain La Caille sent his crew ashore; he kept the helmsmen, the topmen, the gunners and the garrison, that is to say the most seasoned and most useful people. Around two thirty in the morning, on the night of the 12th, Captain La Caille was warned by the officer on duty that two fire ships had been sighted; several vessels, including the *Ocean*, were firing on these vessels. These were to windward of the *Tourville* and it seemed that they were going to board it. Captain La Caille, believing that the confusion resulting from such an event would not allow him to save the crew, formed the plan to temporarily abandon the vessel. The officers consulted declared themselves in favor of this measure, which received the approval of the former commander of the *Jean-Bart*, Captain Le Bozec, a passenger on the *Tourville*. The English ships were anchored a long way off, and, by all accounts, there was no reason to fear that the enemy would seize the vessel.³⁴⁴

The evacuation took place immediately. The boats were supposed to keep a short distance from the *Tourville*, but, driven by the wind and the sea, they reached the Port des Barques. It was then realized that the *Aquilon* and the *Ville-de-Varsovie* had been mistaken for fireships, burned by the English. Captain La Caille returned on board with the personnel, officers, and sailors, whom he had taken ashore two hours earlier. Four men had not left the *Tourville*. Three, at the time of the boats' departure, were sleeping in some remote part of the vessel. The fourth, a second helmsman, claimed to have voluntarily remained on board the *Tourville*; He further stated that during the crew's absence, he had exchanged gunfire with an enemy barge. Since the *Tourville* was, on that day, far from the English and outside their sphere of action, this assertion did not seem accurate. On the 13th, at daybreak, the ships *Valiant*, *Revenge*, and *Theseus*, followed by the frigates *Impérieuse*, *Aigle*, *Unicorn*, and *Emerald*, left the harbor.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, the English flotilla cannonaded the French vessel stranded furthest out to sea, the *Océan*, which responded to the enemy fire with its retreating guns; the action ceased at four thirty. On the morning of the 14th, the *Océan* reached the English port. Admiral Allemand, informed that Lord Gambier was preparing new fireships, organized a flotilla to divert them. On the 15th, the *Tourville*, *Patriote*, *Jemmapes* and *Cassard* entered the Charente. The *Régulus* and *Foudroyant* were the only ships far enough out to sea for the enemy to attack them; on the 17th, the *Foudroyant* reached a safe anchorage.³⁴⁵

The frigate *Indienne* ran aground during the night of the 11th to the 12th on the mudflats of Pointe de l'Aiguille. This frigate, deprived of its longboat, which had been sent to the jetty on the evening of the 11th, was only able to drop a jib anchor; when the *Indienne* floated, the anchor was heaved onto this, which did not hold. Captain Proteau unsuccessfully requested a longboat from the squadron commander. Several days passed, during which the wind and sea carried the frigate further ashore. On the 16th, the *Indienne*, which had its side against the rocks, broke. Captain Proteau called a council of officers and masters; In accordance with general opinion, the frigate was evacuated and burned. On the 20th, several ships of the English flotilla cannonaded the *Regulus*; this vessel was subjected to a new attack on the 24th, in which bombards, gunboats, and boats launching rockets took part at the Congrève. On April 25, the *Regulus* entered the Charente. The same day, Lord Gambier set sail for England.

On the morning of April 12, nine French vessels, stranded on the Palles, were at the mercy of our adversaries. Lord Gambier had eleven vessels, including eight of seventy-four; having a large number of transports, it was easy for him, by lightening these vessels, to reduce their draft. He only put three seventy-fours into motion, and even then these vessels appeared too late in the harbor of the island of Aix. By his slowness and his extreme circumspection, the head of the British fleet allowed us to save five vessels. Public opinion on the other side of the Channel initially welcomed the news of the success over the Rochefort squadron with great satisfaction.³⁴⁶

When the facts became better known, the admiral was blamed for not having made better use of the forces under his command. The captain of the *Impérieuse*, Lord Cochrane, who had played a very bold role in this affair, was a member of Parliament. He warned the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Mulgrave, that he would oppose any proposal to vote thanks to Lord Gambier. The latter, informed of this incident by Lord Mulgrave, requested judges; a court martial was convened. From the examination of the logbooks and signal books belonging to the various ships anchored in the Basques harbor, it seemed to result, said the indictment, that on April 12, Lord Gambier, warned of the possibility of destroying the French ships which were stranded on the Palles, had taken the necessary measures too late to put this plan into execution. The proceedings, which began on July 26, lasted until August 4. The council declared that proof of the facts with which Lord Gambier was charged could not be established; the council added that the said admiral, from March 17 until April 29, had shown himself to be active, zealous, intelligent and solely concerned with conforming his conduct to the true interests of His Majesty's service. After the pronouncement of the judgment, both chambers voted thanks to the admiral, the captains, officers, sailors and marines of the squadron which had operated against the French forces assembled in the harbor of the island of Aix. If the English had not obtained all the advantages they could have hoped for, they had nevertheless succeeded in doing us a lot of harm.³⁴⁷

Of the eleven vessels that made up Rochefort's squadron, four had been destroyed by us or the enemy; as for the seven vessels that had entered the Charente, all had serious damage, and many months would pass before they were fit to put to sea. In reality, Rochefort's squadron, which had posed a threat to the trade of Great Britain and its colonies, no longer existed.

IV

The Minister of the Navy, after informing the Emperor of the events that had taken place in the harbor of the Isle of Aix, asked him for permission to bring Captains Lafon, Clément Laroncière, and Proteau before a court martial "to be judged on their conduct regarding the loss of the vessels they had the honor of commanding." The minister added: "It is also my duty to inform Your Majesty that Captain La Caille, commanding the *Tourville*, is warned, in the very words of his own journal, of having voluntarily abandoned his ship in the presence of the enemy for several hours, and I have the honour of also proposing to Your Majesty that this officer be brought before the same court-martial..." The Emperor, who was then at the Ebersdorff camp near Vienna, issued a decree on 2 June convening a court-martial at the port of Rochefort to judge Captains Clément Laroncière of the *Tonnerre*, Lafon of the *Calcutta*, Proteau of the *Indienne*, and La Caille of the *Tourville*.³⁴⁸

The council was composed of Rear Admiral Bedout, president, ship captains Maureau, Krohm, Barbier, Polony, Tourneur, Lebesque and frigate captains Lévêque, Robert and Leblond Plassan. Rear Admiral L'Hermitte was designated to serve as rapporteur. On September 1, 2, 3, and 4, the accused were interrogated and witnesses heard. On the 5th, Rear Admiral L'Hermitte presented his conclusions. Speaking first of the ship *Tonnerre*, he declared that Captain Clément Laroncière was not guilty of the loss of his ship. However, he criticized him for not having made sufficient efforts to save "the government's effects." He finally said that he should have taken the admiral's orders before burning his ship. Captain Proteau, in Rear-Admiral L'Hermitte's opinion, had committed no fault against his honour, but he had acted with too much haste in the destruction of his frigate. Before deciding on this course, it was appropriate that he report his situation to the admiral and await his orders. Rear-Admiral L'Hermitte then broached a more serious subject. After recalling that the commander of the *Tourville*, having returned to his ship, had managed to save his ship, he added: "He is no less guilty of having abandoned his ship, of not having left it last in a critical circumstance, when he believed himself to be threatened by burning vessels, believed to be enemy fireships." The rapporteur demanded that Captain La Caille be sentenced to death.

The *Calcutta*, attacked at 1:30, had ceased firing between 3:30 and 4:00.³⁴⁹

The evacuation had been carried out in haste, and the captain had not been the last to leave his ship. Finally, the fire having been negligently set, the enemy had boarded the *Calcutta*, which had burned under the English flag. After thus outlining the situation, Rear Admiral L'Hermitte said that Captain Lafon, having failed to defend the honor of the flag, as was his duty to do, deserved death. The verdict was rendered on September 8. By a majority of eight votes to one, the council declared that Captain Clément Laroncière was not guilty of the loss of the ship *Tonnerre*, which he commanded on April 12. Captain Proteau was unanimously acquitted of the charge against him. Nevertheless, the council, by a majority of five votes to four, sentenced him to three months of simple arrest in his room. Captain La Caille, by a majority of six votes to three, was sentenced to two years of detention; he was also to be struck off the list of naval officers and demoted from the Legion of Honour. Finally, Captain Lafon was found guilty, by five votes to four, of "having cowardly abandoned the ship *Calcutta*, in the presence of the enemy." The council sentenced him to death. Captain Lafon was shot the next day, September 9, at four o'clock in the afternoon, on the bow of the ship *Ocean*.

Public sentiment was far from being in agreement on how to view the events of the night of April 11. The differences of opinion, existing outside, were manifested within the council. While five out of nine votes condemned Captain Lafon to death, one of the members of the minority demanded that the captain of the *Calcutta* be banned from his duties for a year.³⁵⁰

Another judge sentenced Captain Lafon to six months of forced arrest; he added that the latter, upon the expiration of his sentence, would be dismissed from service. The same observation must be made for Captain La Caille; the members of the minority did not want him to be demoted. Vice-Admiral Allemand wrote to the minister on May 12: "I think, Monseigneur, that Captain La Caille needs leniency. If Your Excellency would be so kind as to grant him some, given his age and previous service, he will undoubtedly appreciate his debt to you. However, it will be necessary to replace him in his command." "On June 27, Rear Admiral L'Hermitte wrote to Paris that he would be obliged, in view of the text of the law, to request the death penalty against Captains Lafon and La Caille; but he implored, in advance, the clemency of the Minister to whom he pointed out that the Captain of the *Tourville*, having returned to his ship shortly after his departure, had saved his vessel. Captain Lafon's ship, added Admiral L'Hermitte, "was without resources when it was abandoned." The Minister of the Navy wrote to the Emperor on June 30: "This was not one of those events of war for which habit and foresight have prepared; thirty thunderous and burning masses surrounded them. Amidst the flames, smoke and explosions of all kinds, reasoning failed them for a moment..... However, Captain La Caille soon returned to his post and saved his ship. Captain Lafon's ship was destitute when he left it." We must conclude from the above that Captains Lafon and La Caille, guilty in the eyes of the law, found public opinion lenient towards them.³⁵¹

V

Commander Troude, taking advantage of the absence of the English cruiser, left Lorient on February 26 with the eighty-gun ships *Courageux*, on which he had his guidon, *Polonais* and *D'Hautpoult*, captained by Méquet and Le Duc, and the flute-rigged frigates *Furieuse* and *Félicité*. This division was carrying troops, supplies, and munitions to Guadeloupe and Martinique. Commander Troude, having learned at sea that the latter colony had fallen to the English, headed for Les Saintes, where he anchored on the morning of March 29. He immediately dispatched a canoe to inform Major General Ernouf, Captain General of Guadeloupe, of his arrival. A few hours later, sails were sighted. The commander of the English station, Admiral Cochrane, warned by his discoveries of our presence at the anchorage of Les Saintes, arrived with five vessels, five frigates and some lower-ranking vessels. The enemy watched all the passes; boats were kept close to land during the night to indicate, with the help of signals, the movements of our vessels. On April 12, a convoy, coming from Martinique with three thousand soldiers, under the command of General Maitland, rallied Admiral Cochrane. The British troops seized the heights overlooking the harbor and worked to erect batteries there.³⁵²

Threatened with complete destruction, Commander Troude decided to put to sea with the *Courageux*, *D'Hautpoult*, and *Polonais*. He assumed that he would bring most of the English ships with him; the two transport frigates were to take advantage of this circumstance to sail to Guadeloupe. The troops, supplies, and munitions on board the vessels were disembarked. The time for departure was set for ten o'clock in the evening; the three vessels had barely begun their preparations when rockets were launched by the boats tasked with observing us. The French division promptly set sail and left the harbor; The breeze, which was blowing very fresh from the east, allowed him to get a little ahead of the enemy. On the 15th, at daybreak, three vessels, including one with three decks, and several frigates were in sight. The *D'Hautpoult* remained a little behind; a brig, on which the latter vessel was firing with its retreat guns, was the only ship within cannon range. Commander Troude warned the *Polonais* and the *D'Hautpoult* that he would, at eight o'clock in the evening, set a course to the west-northwest, and that the *D'Hautpoult* would be, at the same hour, free to maneuver as it deemed appropriate. When the moment came, the *Courageux* and the *Polonais* set a course on the indicated route while the *D'Hautpoult* steered further north. On the 16th, when day broke, the *Courageux* and the *Polonais*, no longer seeing the enemy, continued their route towards France. On May 23, about fifteen leagues south of the Penmarcks, several vessels were sighted. Commander Troude took chase towards the north; the next day, the enemy ships had disappeared.³⁵³

A few days later, taking advantage of a strong northwest breeze, the two French vessels entered the English Channel; they anchored on May 29 in Cherbourg harbor.

Captain Leduc, taking advantage of the freedom of maneuver he had been given on April 15, had, as we have said, headed further north than the *Courageux* and the *Polonais*. The *D'Hautpoult* was followed by part of the English division; overtaken during the night of the 17th by the thirty-eight-gun frigate *Castor* and the seventy-four-gun *Pompée*, it fought these two vessels vigorously. By daybreak, ten enemy ships, including three vessels, were in sight. The *D'Hautpoult* lowered its flag. Our losses amounted to thirty-six men killed and forty wounded; the *Pompée* had nine killed and thirty wounded, and the *Castor* one killed and six wounded. The flute-rigged frigates, the *Félicité* and the *Furieuse*, captained by Lemarant Kerdaniel and Bayot, which had remained at anchor at Les Saintes while the *Courageux*, the *Polonais*, and the *D'Hautpoult* sailed, put to sea on April 15, bound for Guadeloupe. They anchored in the Basse-Terre harbor, pursued, even under fire from the forts, by the sixty-four-gun ship, the *Intrépide*. During the night, the English launched a vessel converted into a fireship against the *Félicité* and the *Furieuse*; This one, diverted by our boats, jumped, a short distance from the two frigates, without causing them any harm. On June 14, during the night, the *Félicité* and the *Furieuse* set sail to return to France; sighted, shortly after their departure, they were followed by the English cruise. On the 17th, the two frigates separated.³⁵⁴

On the 18th, the *Félicité*, hit by the forty-eight-gun frigate *Latona*, lowered its flag after a short engagement. The French ship had two killed and eighteen wounded; the *Latona* had suffered no losses. The *Félicité's* armament consisted of fourteen twelve-pounder guns. On July 5th, the *Furieuse*, then at 42 degrees north latitude and 36 degrees west longitude, was driven off by the corvette *Bonne-Citoyenne*. The battle began the next day at 9:30 in the morning. The *Furieuse* had two eighteen-pounder guns and twelve thirty-six-pounder carronades; the *Bonne-Citoyenne* carried eighteen thirty-two-pounder carronades and two nine-pounder guns. Captain Lemarant Kerdaniel, seriously wounded, was replaced by Lieutenant Riouffe. At four thirty, the *Furieuse*, having exhausted all her ammunition, lowered her colors; her foremast and mizzenmast were about to fall and she had four feet of water in the hold. Out of a crew of one hundred and sixty-nine men, the *Furieuse* had seventeen killed and thirty-six wounded. The *Bonne-Citoyenne*, less damaged than the *Furieuse* in her hull and in her masts, had only one man killed and five wounded. In this affair, neither energy nor tenacity had been lacking, since the fight had lasted seven hours. The *Félicité* had six fewer cannons than the *Bonne-Citoyenne*; but, on the other hand, her artillery was superior, in terms of caliber. How, under these conditions, had we not done more harm to the enemy? We are forced to conclude that the brave men who were on board this frigate had no military training. Commander Troude, reporting to the minister on his crossing from Lorient to the Antilles, said:³⁵⁵

"I have much to complain about regarding the manner in which several commanding officers maneuvered. I can only except the ship *Polonais*, commanded by Mr. Méquet. I could not be more dissatisfied with my crew, which includes the military gunners, the garrison, and especially the boatmasters."

Several ships sent to supply our colonies did not fare better than the *D'Hautpoult*, the *Furieuse*, and the *Félicité*. The forty-four-gun *Topaze*, captained by Lahalle, left Brest on December 7, 1808, bound for Cayenne, where it carried one hundred soldiers and a cargo of flour. During the night following his departure, the winds were blowing from the north-northeast, a good breeze, and the frigate lost its two topmasts. Captain Lahalle reported this damage to the minister in the following terms: "Due to the inexperience of the helmsmen who, despite the repeated orders of the captain and an officer placed to steer, repeatedly launched into the wind, to the point of putting the sails completely in the stern and finally ended up making us lose our masts..." Arriving on January 13, in front of Cayenne, Captain Lahalle saw three warships which were at anchor in front of the entrance to the port. Wanting to find out about the situation in the colony, he sent a boat ashore when night fell with Battalion Commander Bernard. This officer, who was aide-de-camp to the governor, was returning to his post after having completed a mission in France. On the 14th, the *Topaze* was chased by a vessel; when the pursuit ceased, she was downwind of Surinam. Captain Lahalle decided to head for the Antilles; he landed, on the night of the 21st, on the northwest tip of Guadeloupe.³⁵⁶

At daybreak, the forty-eight-gun *Jason*, the forty-gun *Cleopatra*, and two corvettes were sighted. The *Topaze*, about to be hit by these vessels, anchored near Pointe Noire, under the protection of a battery in which, unfortunately, only one gun was capable of firing. After several hours of fierce fighting, Captain Lahalle, finding it impossible to continue his resistance, attempted to evacuate his ship and set it on fire. The lifeboats, sent ashore with part of the crew, did not return, so the flag was lowered; one hundred and fifty-nine men remained on board the *Topaze*.

The forty-six gun *Junon*, Captain Rousseau, had left Cherbourg in November 1808, bound for the Antilles. This frigate, which had fortunately arrived at its destination, left Les Saintes on February 7, 1809, to return to France. On the 8th, it was sighted by two English brigs which followed it, firing cannons. On the 10th, one of the brigs had disappeared; but two forty-six gun frigates, the *Horatio* and the *Latona*, were in sight. At half past twelve, combat began between the *Horatio* and the *Junon*. At forty minutes past two, the English frigate was dismasted from its topmast and its main topmast. The *Latona*, heading under full sail for the scene of the battle, the *Junon*, which had lost only her foretopsail yard, moved away from the *Horatio* in order to repair the most urgent damage. She fired cannonballs at the corvette and the brig which were following her, harassing her. A little after three o'clock, the *Latona* arrived abeam of the *Junon* and a new battle began.³⁵⁷

At four o'clock, the French frigate, completely dismasted, with only five guns left in working order, lowered its flag. The number of dead was twenty-five and the number of wounded sixty. Captain Rousseau, wounded during the battle, died the next day. The vigorous defense of the *Junon* did the greatest credit to Captain Rousseau, his second in command, Lieutenant Emeric, and the officers and crew of this frigate. The *Horatio* had seven killed and twenty-six wounded, seventeen of them seriously; the *Latona* six wounded, and the corvette *Driver* one wounded.

On April 4, the forty-four-gun frigate *Niemen*, captained by Dupotet, left the Gironde for the Île-de-France. On the 5th, this frigate, which was running west-northwest, with fresh east-northeast winds, maneuvered to get away from two suspect sails. Around half past eleven in the evening, a frigate, the forty-six-gun *Amethyst*, was sighted at a short distance. A quarter of an hour later, the two vessels engaged in combat within pistol range. Captain Dupotet tried several times, but without success, to board his adversary. At half past two, the French frigate's mizzenmast fell and the port rail caught fire; the fire was brought under control and the combat resumed with renewed vigor. A little after three in the morning, the mainmast and mizzenmast of the *Amethyst* fell into the sea; This frigate, no longer obeying its rudder, arrived with the wind behind it and received, in this position, a few volleys to which it did not respond. It was believed, on board the *Niemen*, that the *Amethyst* had lowered its colors and Captain Dupotet was preparing to send an officer on board this vessel when the *Arethusa* of forty-eight appeared.³⁵⁸

A new battle began. At four thirty, fire broke out in the *Niemen's* main topmast, and shortly afterward, the mainmast fell. The French frigate's ensign was lowered. "The valour shown in this action by the officers and crew of the *Niemen*," Captain Dupotet wrote to the minister, "is beyond my praise, and I confine myself to asking Your Excellency to be kind enough, by drawing the Emperor's attention to their conduct, to procure for them the reward they so covet." The *Niemen* carried twenty-eight eighteen-pounder cannons, eight eight-pounders, and eight thirty-six-pounder carronades. Her first opponent, the *Amethyst*, had twenty-six eighteen-pounder guns, two nine-pounders, and eighteen thirty-two-pounder carronades; the *Arethusa's* armament consisted of twenty-eight eighteen-pounder guns and twenty thirty-two-pounder carronades. The *Niemen* had forty-four killed and fifty wounded, twenty-two of them seriously. The *Amethyst* had eight killed and thirty-seven wounded; the *Arethusa* had suffered no losses.

On November 15, the forty-gun frigates the *Renommée* and the *Clorinde*, captains Roquebert and de Saint-Cricq, accompanying the flutes the *Seine* and the *Loire*, set sail for Guadeloupe. This division was under the command of Captain Roquebert of the *Clorinde*. On December 13, about twenty leagues from La Désirade, two ships were sighted; one of them was the forty-six-gun frigate *La Junon* and the other the brig *Observateur*. Combat began immediately. After a short cannonade, *Junon* was boarded on the starboard side by *Clorinde*, and on the port side by *Renommée*; the English frigate dropped its foresail and moved away.³⁵⁹

Joined by the *Clorinde* and boarded again, she lowered her flag; the battle had lasted no more than forty minutes. The *Junon*, disabled and sinking, was given over to flames. The *Observateur* fired a few cannonballs at the two frigates, then made sail and escaped. Ninety men had been put out of action on the English frigate; the *Renommée* had fifteen killed and twenty-three wounded, and the *Clorinde* six killed and fifteen wounded. The French frigates, after hastily repairing their damage, headed for Guadeloupe. On the 15th, Captain Roquebert headed north to avoid several suspect sails; during the night, land having been sighted forward, the division held to the wind, tacks to starboard. The weather was squally and the breeze was blowing very fresh from the east-northeast. Around eleven o'clock, the two frigates ran aground; the *Seine* and the *Loire* immediately took tacks to the other side. The *Renommée* and the *Clorinde*, throwing cannons and cannonballs into the sea, managed to refloat themselves. When daylight came, the two transports were no longer in sight; Captain Roquebert assumed that these vessels had made their way to their destination. Considering that he could no longer be of any help to them, he decided to return to France; the two frigates anchored in the harbor of Brest on January 23, 1810. The *Seine* and the *Loire*, which had been heading for Guadeloupe, were sighted and chased away on the 17th by several enemy vessels. Recognizing the impossibility of reaching Basse-Terre, the two frigates entered Anse à la Barque and immediately set about landing their cargo. On the 18th, the enemy appeared in force off the bay and opened fire on the two transports.³⁶⁰

They responded vigorously, supported by a four-gun battery defending the anchorage, but the fight was too unequal to last long. The two frigates were evacuated and left to burn.

VI

For some time now, the English had been making preparations for an expedition to operate in the Scheldt. The British government intended to destroy the port of Flushing and the squadron commanded by Admiral Missiessy. This squadron, composed of ten vessels of seventy-four guns, was almost entirely in the port of Flushing at the beginning of March 1809. No plan of campaign could be more popular in England, where the wonders accomplished in the Antwerp arsenal aroused the most lively fears. Our adversaries not only feared the creation of a large fleet, they wondered if, in the future, the Scheldt would not be the starting point of a military expedition directed against Great Britain. Leaving the port of Flushing was, for vessels of seventy-four, a slow and difficult operation. The depth of the channel, at high tide, did not exceed eighteen or nineteen feet. Now, even without artillery, our vessels did not pull less than seventeen and a half feet astern; lightened to leave the port, they completed their armament in the harbor.³⁶¹

The position of our squadron, trapped in Flushing, would therefore have been very critical if the English, arriving unexpectedly with a considerable naval force, had simultaneously landed troops. This place, attacked by land and sea, would have had difficulty withstanding a bombardment carried out using powerful means. The capture of Flushing placed our ships and five to six thousand sailors in the hands of the enemy; but to achieve these important results, we had to act promptly so as not to give Admiral Missiessy time to leave Flushing. The English let the favorable moment pass; by the end of March, Admiral Missiessy was in the Scheldt with his ten ships.

After the disaster suffered by the Rochefort squadron, Admiral Decrès, frightened by the responsibility that weighed on him and fearing, on the other hand, that the preparations made in England had the Scheldt as their objective, asked the Emperor, on April 15, 1809, that the squadron return to Flushing. Admiral Missiessy was opposed to this project; he found it imprudent to link the fate of his ships to that of this place. The squadron, enclosed in the port, occupying a narrow space, was exposed to suffering greatly from a bombardment; its presence alone would attract the attention of the enemy and should decide him to act in the Scheldt. Finally, the execution of the minister's orders entailed a very delicate operation whose consequences had to be foreseen. The ships entering the port, one by one, after having unloaded their cannons, what would be the situation of those who would remain last in the harbor? Without artillery, unable to be rescued, they would be delivered to all the enemy's enterprises.³⁶²

Admiral Missiessy, summoned to Paris to consult with the minister on the measures to be taken in the event that the expedition being prepared in the ports of England were to head for the Scheldt, presented these various considerations to the minister, who acknowledged their validity. The order sent to the squadron to enter Flushing was rescinded. Admiral Decrès wrote a letter to the Emperor on April 27, which read: "I found that the squadron's entry into Flushing would be a sign of timidity and weakness that should not be displayed." These considerations have been reinforced by the conviction I have acquired that it would be easier for the enemy to harm Your Majesty's squadron by bombarding Flushing than by sending his infernalities up the Scheldt, because the squadron will sail up it, if necessary, as far as Lillo. This opinion has been shared by Vice-Admiral Missiessy, who is in Paris for two days and with whom I am coordinating the measures and details of foresight that the circumstances require. This letter proves, contrary to the generally accepted opinion, that the English expedition up the Scheldt, when it took place in July, as we shall see later, could not have caused any surprise to the French government.

Admiral Missiessy, free to move, maneuvered in the lower Scheldt, but he stayed, for the most part, at Warden, about eight or nine leagues away, following the windings of the river, above Flushing. The English were now to have Antwerp as their objective, where it was obvious that the French squadron would take refuge if it were threatened by superior forces. The expedition planned by the British government was therefore taking on very large proportions.³⁶³

Although Austria, defeated at Wagram, had sued for peace, the cabinet of Saint James did not abandon its plans. It assumed that the troops, mobilized to repel the English army, would be defeated before the French government had the opportunity to send reinforcements. By the middle of July, preparations were completed. The expeditionary fleet comprised thirty-nine vessels, twenty-five frigates, thirty-one corvettes, five bombards, twenty-three gunboats, fifty-nine lower-ranking vessels, and eighty-two gunboats. The number of transport vessels was between four and five hundred, carrying forty thousand men, several thousand horses, artillery, munitions, equipment, and provisions. The fleet was placed under the command of Sir John Strachan; Lord Chatham, the elder brother of the famous minister, commanded in chief the land and sea forces. The expedition was about to leave when it was learned in London that Admiral Missiessy was off Flushing; it was believed that he intended to defend the entrance to the Scheldt. Lord Gardner, with twelve ships, was ordered to attack our squadron; on the other hand, a division of the fleet set sail with orders to land the twelve thousand men it carried in the northern part of South Beveland. These troops were to seize the batteries established on the bank of the Western Scheldt and occupy them. Masters of these positions, the English could have inconvenienced the French squadron, withdrawing to Antwerp before the forces of Admiral Gardner. The instructions given to Sir John Strachan required him to make a double landing, the first on the island of Valcheren and the second on the island of Cadzand.³⁶⁴

The English intended to capture Flushing very quickly; the detachment landed on Cadzand Island was tasked with capturing the batteries established on the left bank of the Scheldt. The expeditionary fleet, thus gaining control of the Western Scheldt, would have sailed as far as Sant-Vliet, on the right bank of the Scheldt, where it would have met the troops landed in southern Beveland or having passed through the Eastern Scheldt. On July 29, the bulk of the expedition arrived off the Strait of Scheldt; there was a strong offshore breeze and the sea was rough. The ships, frigates, and all deep-draft vessels remained offshore. The ships carrying the troops destined for the Walcheren expedition rounded the island from the north, seeking a favorable point for the landing. A large number of vessels, passing through the channels that separate Walcheren Island from the North and South Beveland Islands, anchored while waiting for the progress of the army and fleet to allow them to safely sail up the Western Scheldt. The English, misjudging the number of troops we had on Cadzand Island, lost time in carrying out the landing. On the 31st, Lord Chatham ordered the troops intended for this operation to be directed to the Eastern Scheldt.

Admiral Missiessy had never considered defending Flushing; he had moved closer to the Mouth of the Scheldt so that his vessels would have more room to maneuver. News of the enemy's arrival reached him on July 29. Learning on the 30th that the English had appeared in the north of the island of Walcheren and the southern island of Beveland, he decided to go up the Scheldt.³⁶⁵

On the afternoon of the 31st, the squadron anchored at Warden; by August 1st, it was off Lillo. The maneuver, carried out by the English to hinder our retreat, had failed. Admiral Missiessy sent soldiers from his ships' garrisons and cannons to the forts of Lillo and Liefkenshoek. These two forts, which defended the approaches to Antwerp against any attempted attack by a fleet, were in poor condition; work was hurried to repair them. On August 2nd, the English entered the fort of Batz, abandoned by the garrison. Since the Eastern Scheldt was only passable for small vessels, and only as far as Berg Op Zoom, they had to wait until the expeditionary fleet could navigate freely in the Western Scheldt before going any further.

Fifteen thousand men had landed on July 31 at Oost Capelle, in the north of the island of Walcheren. Easily repelling the small detachments sent to meet them, the English occupied Middleburg, the island's capital, and laid siege to Flushing. Although General Monnet, who commanded the garrison, had cut the dikes near Fort Rameskens, he did not allow enough water into the island to inconvenience the English. On the 13th, the besiegers opened fire on the town with fifty-eight large-caliber cannons; The land batteries were supported by divisions of bombards and gunboats. On the 14th, seven vessels of seventy-four anchored off Flushing and took part in the bombardment. On the 16th, General Monnet signed the surrender of the place. The English navy had suffered only minor losses; there were two killed and eighteen wounded on board the vessels, and seven killed and twenty wounded on the flotilla.³⁶⁶

The English, having nothing to fear from the batteries on the left bank, could, from then on, consider themselves masters of the navigation of the Western Scheldt. A large number of vessels, which had passed through the Weeregat and the Sloe, had already arrived at Batz. On August 23, there were, at this point, eight vessels, sixteen frigates, eighteen corvettes, thirty-eight brigs, forty-two cutters or gunboats, eight bombards, ten fire ships, and one hundred and sixty-four transports, or three hundred and four vessels.

Our adversaries, who had so far obtained no other advantage than the capture of Flushing, were reaching the difficult moment of their enterprise. They had to abandon the islands, cross to the mainland, and march on Antwerp; Now, the situation had changed considerably since the day the expeditionary fleet had appeared before the Mouths of the Scheldt. Antwerp, which had become the headquarters of Marshal Bernadotte, saw soldiers of all arms arriving within its walls every day. Admiral Missiessy's squadron was safe. A jetty had been built at the height of the forts of Lillo and Liefkenshoek, then another closer to Antwerp; behind the first stood the flotilla ships and behind the second the vessels. The unhealthy air of the marshes of Walcheren and the Zeeland Islands and the poor quality of the water were wreaking havoc on the English army. The number of sick people was increasing every day in alarming proportions. A council of war, convened by Lord Chatham to examine the situation, expressed the opinion that the retreat of the army was imperatively required by the circumstances.³⁶⁷

The English government, immediately notified, was forced, despite its regrets, to approve this resolution. Lord Chatham departed, leaving twelve thousand men at Flushing, whom fevers quickly decimated. The British government determined to abandon this place just as we were preparing to retake it. The English withdrew in December 1809, after blowing up the military works and destroying the naval arsenal from top to bottom. Our adversaries had paid dearly for this result. The campaign expenses exceeded twenty-five million pounds sterling; the English army had fourteen thousand sick, of whom four thousand had succumbed. The survivors were to remain, for a long time, unfit for military service. Such was the outcome of this expedition, as ill-conceived as it was ill-directed.

VII

On February 28, the forty-gun frigates *Pénélope* and *Pomone*, captains Dubourdieu and Montfort, left Toulon to give chase to the frigate *Proserpine*, which, in the absence of the English squadron, had been tasked with monitoring our movements. After several hours of futile pursuit, our frigates returned to anchor; when night fell, *Pénélope* and *Pauline* set sail again, followed at some distance by two vessels. The next day, at four o'clock in the morning, near Cape Sicié, the *Proserpine* was joined by the two frigates.³⁶⁸

After a very short engagement, the English ship lowered its flag; it had eleven killed and fifteen wounded. No men on the *Pénélope* and the *Pomone* had been hit by the fire from the *Proserpine*.

Rear Admiral Baudin, commanding a division of the Toulon squadron, received orders to lead a convoy to Barcelona. He set sail on October 21 with the ships *Robuste*, on which he had his flag, the *Borée* and the *Lion*, and the frigates *Pauline* and *Amélie*. On the 23rd, around noon, off Cape Saint Sebastian, sails were reported. The admiral, after ordering the transport vessels to enter the Bay of Roses, took the open sea, heading east-southeast, with north-easterly winds. At three thirty, fifteen sails were sighted in a southerly direction, which were lost from sight at five o'clock. The winds having shifted east and then south-east, the squadron veered. The weather having become bad during the night, it was necessary to take in reefs; this maneuver, poorly executed, caused our vessels to fall to leeward. On the 24th, Admiral Baudin, recognizing the impossibility of reaching the Bay of Marseilles, headed west. He anchored at seven thirty in the evening at Aigues-Mortes, with the three vessels and the *Pauline*; the frigate the *Amélie* had disappeared during the night. On the 25th, at daybreak, the French division set sail and kept a short distance from the coast, so as not to be seen by the enemy; the admiral intended to anchor off Cette, under the protection of the forts. In the morning, six English vessels were sighted. Around noon, the *Borée*, the *Robuste* and the *Lion* touched; the first freed itself, but the other two remained stranded.³⁶⁹

The admiral having ordered the *Borée* and the *Pauline* to continue their course, these two vessels headed for Cette, exchanging cannonballs with the English vessels, the *Tigre* and the *Leviathan*, which had set out in pursuit. Ensign Villat, having come to meet the two French vessels, brought the *Borée* into the port of Cette. "No pilot," wrote Admiral Baudin, "would have dared to attempt it." The *Pauline* having imitated the *Borée*'s maneuver, these two vessels found themselves safe. The English, no doubt fearing to share the misfortune of the *Lion* and the *Robuste*, remained offshore to observe. The two French vessels, which had run aground on a hard bottom, soon foundered; on the 26th, Admiral Baudin gave the order to evacuate them and set them on fire. The *Borée* and the *Pauline*, taking advantage of a favourable moment, headed for Toulon, where they arrived on 19 November. People in Paris seemed surprised that Admiral Baudin had changed tack on the evening of 23 October. If he had kept his tacks to port and, the next day, had found himself in the middle of the English fleet, sighted at the end of the day on the 22nd, heading south, he would have been more justly criticized for having run out to sea. The frigate *Amélie*, continuing the starboard tack, had reached Marseilles where the three vessels and the *Pauline* would also have arrived, if these four vessels had not fallen to leeward while taking reefs. This maneuver, carried out by inexperienced personnel, had lasted too long; the crews, composed of conscripts, were carrying out exercises in the harbor, but, at sea, and especially with bad weather, they no longer knew anything.³⁷⁰

During 1809, the navy lost the corvettes *Hébé*, *Iris*, *Milan*, and *Mouche*, the brigs *Bougainville*, *Fanfaron*, *Basque*, and *Béarnais*, and the transports *Var* and *Champenoise*. All these vessels were captured by superior forces.

The vessels sent to bring relief to our colonies almost all fell into enemy hands. Death and disease left gaps in the ranks of the colonial troops that could not be filled. Not only were the garrisons insufficient in terms of numbers, but the men, considered able-bodied, were, for the most part, unable to withstand the fatigues of war. The English, informed of this situation, resolved to take control of our overseas possessions. On January 12, 1809, an Anglo-Portuguese expedition seized Cayenne. On January 30, Admiral Cochrane appeared off Martinique with a large fleet carrying ten thousand men. The English landed without encountering any resistance; several posts, entrusted to detachments of the militia, had been abandoned. The Governor General, Vice-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, had barely 2,400 soldiers at his disposal. On February 1 and 2, our troops encountered the enemy, on whom they inflicted very heavy losses; too few in number to hold the campaign, they withdrew to Fort Desaix with the sailors, at the head of which was placed Captain Denis de Trobriand, who commanded the *Amphitrite*. This frigate and the buildings anchored in the various ports of the colony were set on fire, with the exception of the *Diligente*, taken by the enemy in the harbor of Saint-Pierre.³⁷¹

Admiral Villaret, besieged in Fort Desaix, signed a capitulation on February 24, by which the colony passed under English rule. General Ferrand had maintained his authority over the eastern part of Santo Domingo until news of the French entering Spain reached the colony. When an insurrection, fomented by the governor of Puerto Rico, broke out, he attempted to suppress it, although he had insufficient forces at his disposal. On November 7, 1808, the general, who had advanced into the interior with five hundred soldiers, was surrounded by the enemy. Unable to rally his troops, which had been thrown into disorder, seeing his bravest officers killed, on the point of being taken prisoner, he committed suicide. His successor, General Barquier, sustained an eight-month siege of Santo Domingo. At the beginning of July 1809, having no more provisions, he entered into negotiations with the commander-in-chief of the British troops, General Carmichael. On the 7th, a capitulation, by virtue of which our brave soldiers were to be transported to France, delivered Santo Domingo to the Spanish. Senegal was occupied on July 14 by British troops. On January 28, 1810, the English landed a body of about ten thousand men in Guadeloupe; They easily took control of an island, defended by a weak garrison, composed of men exhausted, for the most part, by a long stay in this colony. The English having seized, at the same time, the islands of Saint Eustatius, Saint Martin and Saba, the French and the Dutch no longer possessed a single colony in the Caribbean Sea.³⁷²

There was no squadron movement during the course of 1810. In the North Sea, Sir John Richard Strachan was monitoring Admiral Missiessy's fleet; Admiral Sir Charles Cotton was cruising off Toulon, where we had eleven ships, commanded by Admiral Allemand. A few ships, anchored at Cherbourg, Brest, and Lorient, were being observed by detachments from the Canal squadron. The forty-four-gun frigates, the *Eliza* and the *Amazon*, captained by Louis Freycinet and Rousseau, were completing their outfitting at Le Havre; these frigates were ordered to seize the first favorable opportunity to sail to Cherbourg. On November 10, a gale forced the division that was watching the two frigates to move away. On the 12th, the lookouts having reported only a small corvette offshore, the port chiefs, who belonged not to the navy but to the administration, decided that the enemy had not been able to reach the coast since the bad weather had stopped. "The administrative authority," wrote the captain of the *Eliza* to the minister a few days later, "had, in the afternoon, a corvée [fatigue party] of the same men who had been given to us on the previous tide thrown on board the two frigates. They were either infirm men or very weak children, the only resource unfortunately that the port could offer; and Captain Rousseau and I would not have received them if we had not feared being accused of disobedience and ill will. Finally, my lord, despite our pressing complaints about the type of composition and the excessive weakness of the crews, about the uncertainty of the wind which, blowing from the north-east in the port, appeared to us, at sea, to be only north-north-east and even north, we received publicly from the chief commissioner such a formal order to set sail that we had to execute it immediately."³⁷³

The two frigates, leaving Le Havre at eleven o'clock in the evening, took tack to starboard with north-northeast winds that declined and turned to the north. At half past midnight, two ships were sighted a little astern and to leeward. Around five o'clock in the morning, Captains Rousseau and Freycinet, recognizing the impossibility of rounding the Saint-Marcouf Islands, took tack to the other side. "We had great difficulty," wrote Captain Freycinet, "executing this move. Our crews were dying of seasickness. I wanted to arm my battery, but it was impossible." "The two frigates headed for the anchorage of the Saint-Marcouf Islands, pursued by the English ships, from which they received several volleys of fire to which they did not respond. After dropping anchor at six o'clock in the morning between the Saint-Marcouf Islands and the mainland, the *Amazone* and the *Éliza* set sail at eleven o'clock and reached the anchorage of La Hougue. They positioned themselves close to land and made the necessary arrangements to anchor if the enemy came to attack them. On the 14th, the *Éliza* dragged and ran aground on a hard bottom; the frigate had to be lightened very quickly. "It is men," wrote Captain Freycinet, "that I am short of; I have only very young men who, for three days and three nights, have been dying of fatigue." The *Éliza* was refloated. The two frigates, supported by the forts, repelled several enemy attacks. On November 27, the *Amazone*, taking advantage of the distance of the English cruise, set sail and reached Le Havre. The *Eliza* worked to prepare itself for sea; on December 22, at six o'clock in the evening, it set sail for Cherbourg under the direction of the two best pilots in that port.³⁷⁴

She headed for Cherbourg under the direction of the two best pilots in that port. The winds were blowing strongly from the southwest and the sea was rough. An hour after setting sail, the *Éliza* ran aground in Réville Cove. This event seemed so extraordinary that people wondered, however improbable it might seem, if there had been treason; an investigation was ordered into the causes that had led to the *Éliza's* grounding. "We had the sad conviction," wrote Captain Freycinet, "that the helmsmen had steered to windward of the route they had been given." "The Minister of the Navy, in his report to the Emperor, first dismissed any thought of premeditation, then added: "The culprits are the chiefs and second chiefs of the helmsman. The pilot told them northeast and they ran northwest. They assure me, and I believe them, that they truly heard northwest. It is no less true that this indicates a lack of discernment in the chief of the helmsman and perhaps some organizational defect in the maneuvering department." The preceding details, which we felt it necessary to go into, give an idea, unfortunately too exact, of our navy at that time. The *Amazone*, which had returned to Le Havre on November 27, left this port on March 23, 1811. This frigate was heading for Cherbourg when it struck a rocky bottom and dismantled its rudder. Captain Rousseau, unable to continue his journey, anchored in a cove near Barfleur. On the 24th, during the day, the *Amazone* was cannonaded by the *Berwick* of seventy-four, the *Amelia* and the *Niobe*, of forty-eight.³⁷⁵

The French frigate suffered two deaths and ten serious injuries in this incident; the *Amazone*, which had run aground while heeling, had thirteen feet of water in its hold on the 26th. Recognizing the impossibility of saving his ship, Captain Rousseau had it evacuated and burned. The year 1810 saw the restoration of an institution destroyed twenty years earlier. By virtue of an imperial decree dated September 27, two special naval schools were created: one in Brest, on the ship *Ulysse*, which took the name *Tourville*, and the other in Toulon, on an old Russian vessel called the *Duquesne*. Each of these buildings was to accommodate three hundred students, aged thirteen to fifteen. The course of theoretical and practical studies lasted three years. During their stay at the school, students who met certain conditions indicated in the decree of September 27 became second-class students at the end of the first year, and first-class students at the end of the second. At the end of the third year, students belonging to this last category were appointed first-class cadets. Students who had reached the second class but did not successfully pass the examinations necessary to advance to the first class left the school as second-class cadets. It is surprising that the government waited so long to reestablish the schools.³⁷⁶

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BOOK IX

Events in India since 1809. - The *Entreprenant* is sent to Manila. Cruise of the *Venus*, the *Channel*, and the *Bellone*. - Réunion Island is captured by the English. Battle of Grand Port. - The English lose four frigates. Captain Bouvet's sortie with the *Iphigénie* and the *Astrée*, Capture of the *Africaine*. Battle of the *Venus* and the *Ceylan*. Battle of the *Venus* and the *Boadicea*. Capture of the *Île-de-France*. - Battle of the *Néréide*, the *Renommée*, and the *Clorinde* against the *Astræa*, the *Phœbe*, the *Galatea*, and the *Race Horse*. Battle of a Franco-Italian division against four English frigates. - Capture of the *Alacrity* by the *Abeille*. Battle of the *Pomone*, the *Pauline* and the *Persane* against the *Alceste*, the *Active* and the *Unité*. Capture of the brig the *Teaser*, the *Pluvier* is set on fire by the English. - Capture of five English barges. Admiral Allemand goes from Lorient to Brest. - The *Ariane* and the *Andromaque* are evacuated and set on fire by their crews. Battle of the *Rivoli* and the *Victorious*. Battle of the *Renard* and the *Swallow*. Cruise of the *Gloire*. Battle of the *Arethuse* and the *Amelia*. Battle of the *Romulus*. Disarmament of the Toulon squadron. - Admiral Missiessy's crews defend Antwerp and the forts of the Scheldt. The *Regulus* is set on fire in the Gironde. Frigates sent on a cruise. End of hostilities. Peace treaty signed on May 30, 1814. - Resumption of hostilities. New peace treaty signed on November 20, 1815.

I

A small vessel, the schooner *La Mouche No. 6*, which left France in July 1808, brought news of the French entry into Spain to the Île-de-France. It was urgent to know what decision the Governor General of the Philippines would take when he was informed of this serious event. *La Mouche No. 6* was sent to Manila with dispatches from General Decaen. He strongly urged that the colony of the Philippines maintain neutrality in a conflict that divided even the Spanish. Unfortunately, the inhabitants had already declared themselves for Ferdinand VII; the staff and crew of the French vessel were imprisoned.³⁷⁷

General Decaen learned, in May 1809, of the victories won by our troops at the end of 1808, and of Joseph's return to Madrid. Believing the moment to be favorable to take further action, he dispatched the *Entreprenant*, Captain Bouvet, to Manila. As he did not know what had become of the *Mouche No. 6*, he recommended to Lieutenant Bouvet to act with circumspection. The *Entreprenant* captured, near the Strait of Malacca, the *Clyde*, a richly laden ship, and the English war schooner *Marguerite*. Captain Bouvet learned from this last vessel what the state of mind was in the Philippines. Despite this unfavorable information, Captain Bouvet continued his journey and arrived off Manila on August 29. After having obtained, through his energetic attitude, the surrender of the staff and crew of the *Mouche No. 6*, he headed for the Île-de-France. The *Entreprenant* captured, near Poolo-Tinguy, a 300-ton English brig loaded with ropes; this prize constituted a very valuable resource for our naval station.

The 44-year-old *Vénus*, which arrived at the Île-de-France at the beginning of 1809, the frigate *La Manche* and the schooner *La Créole* put to sea in April. This division, placed under the orders of Captain Hamelin, of the *Venus*, after having supplied the post of Tamatave, established itself on a cruise; on July 25, it took the brig *Orient*, near the Nicobar Islands, and a three-master on the west coast of Sumatra. On November 19, three ships of the East India Company, *Charlestown*, *United Kingdom* and *Windham* were sighted; after a very short engagement, the first two lowered their flag.³⁷⁸

The *Windham*, pursued by the *Venus*, surrendered to this frigate on the 22nd; this vessel, having become separated from the *Venus* during a gale, was recaptured by the English. The forty-four-ship *Bellone*, Captain Duperré, arrived at the Île-de-France on May 14, 1809, and left the colony in August to cruise in the Bay of Bengal. This frigate, after capturing the corvette *Victor* on November 2nd, seized the forty-eight-gun Portuguese frigate *Minerve* on the 23rd of the same month, after a very fierce battle. On 31 May 1809, the *Caroline* had captured two ships of the East India Company, the *Straestham* and the *Europe*, in the Bay of Bengal. Learning that the ports of the Ile-de-France were being watched by the enemy, Captain Billiard anchored in the harbor of Saint-Paul, where he was immediately blocked by the commander of the English station, Commodore Rowley. The latter, joined on 21 September by a convoy leaving Rodrigue Island with troops, carried out a landing near the town. Pushing back the small detachment occupying Saint-Paul, the enemy seized the batteries and directed fire on the *Caroline* and its prizes; attacked by land and sea, the three ships lowered their flag. The Governor of Réunion, General Desbrulys, who had come in haste to Saint-Paul, was surrounded by the population who begged him not to expose the town to bombardment. Yielding to the prayers of the inhabitants, he did not allow the English to be attacked. Frightened by the thought of the consequences that this determination could have for him, the general, whose mind was troubled by the events, committed suicide. The English re-embarked on October 7, but they returned on July 7, 1810, with considerable forces.³⁷⁹

Colonel Sainte-Suzanne, who had replaced General Desbrulys, had barely a few hundred soldiers at his disposal; moreover, he could only count on a very small portion of the National Guard. After a few engagements against superior forces, the French detachments retreated. A capitulation, signed on July 9, brought the colony into British hands.

At the beginning of 1810, the forty-four-gun frigate *Astrée*, under Captain Lemarant, came to reinforce the station at Île-de-France. Captain Bouvet, of the *Entreprenant*, promoted to the rank of frigate captain, was appointed by General Decaen to command the *Minerve*. On March 14, 1810, the *Bellone*, the *Minerve*, and the *Victor* put to sea under the command of Captain Duperré. On July 3, near the island of Mayotte, three ships of the Compagnie des Indes, the *Ceylan*, the *Windham*, and the *Atzell*, were sighted. These ships immediately formed up in line of battle; each of them was armed with thirty twenty-four-pounders and had, in addition to its crew of one hundred and sixty men, three hundred passenger soldiers. The *Minerve*, which was alone in a position to fight, attacked the three ships of the Company with the greatest vigor. This frigate had lost its main topmast and its topgallant mast when the *Bellone*, which was straining under sail, arrived on the battlefield. Around seven thirty in the evening, the three English ships lowered their flag. The *Atzell*, taking advantage of the darkness of the night, made sail and moved away; the *Victor*, which had set out in pursuit, believing it saw the rallying signal on board the *Bellone*, gave chase.³⁸⁰

Captain Duperré, after making the most urgent repairs on the island of Anjouan, headed for the Île-de-France.

During the night of August 13-14, Captain Willoughby of the frigate *La Néréide*, cruising off Grand Port, captured the island of La Passe by surprise, located three miles offshore. On the 17th, an English detachment landed on the coast and captured the battery defending the northern channel of the harbor. The enemy, before re-embarking, spiked the guns, burned the gun carriages, and blew up the powder magazine. Such was the state of affairs when, on the 20th, at daybreak, Captain Duperré, having left the island of Anjouan, as we have seen above, to go to the Ile-de-France, appeared off the coast of Grand Port. The French colors were flying on board the frigate *La Néréide* and on the island of La Passe; the lookouts announced that the enemy was cruising to the north of the island. The Bellone made reconnaissance signals to which the ship, anchored under the island of La Passe, did not respond. It was believed that this vessel was the former frigate *La Sémillante*, which had become the *Charles* since it had been given over to commerce. Captain Duperré continued on his way. When the *Victor*, which was marching at the head of the division, arrived alongside the *Néréide*, this frigate and the *Île de la Passe*, flying British colours, opened a very lively fire on this vessel; the *Victor* lowered its sails and anchored. Commander Duperré, assuming that this whole part of the island was in the hands of the English, signalled to hold to wind. This order could no longer be carried out by the vessels preceding it; the *Minerve* and the *Ceylan*, pushed by a fresh breeze from astern, were already engaged in the channel. These two vessels, which had quickly put themselves into action, responded to the fire from the *Île de la Passe* and the *Néréide*.³⁸¹

Captain Bouvet ordered the captain of the *Victor* to cut his cable and follow him. Commander Duperré, unwilling to abandon the ships of his division, continued on his way, having received a signal from the masthead to imitate his maneuver. The *Bellone*, after firing a broadside at the *Néréide*, joined the *Minerve*, the *Ceylan*, and the *Victor* anchored near the junction of the two passes. The *Windham*, complying with the first order given by the division commander, had held the wind. When the second signal appeared, the officer in command of this prize did not immediately decide to follow his commander; Shortly after, he found himself a long way from the *Bellone*. Fearing then to expose himself alone to the fire of the *Néréide* and the fort, he moved away; the *Windham* was captured the next day at the entrance to the Noire River by the *Sirius*. The captain of the latter ship sent his prize to Bourbon to inform Commodore Rowley of the events that had occurred the day before off the Île de la Passe, then he forced his sail to reach the *Néréide*.

Captain Duperré had the satisfaction of learning that the Île de la Passe was the only point that had fallen into English hands. His ships took up position, close to land, in the following order: the *Victor*, the *Bellone*, the *Ceylan*, and the *Minerve*. The four ships berthed, presenting their port tack to sea. The division, as a result of the armament of the prizes and the losses incurred during the campaign, had very reduced numbers. A reinforcement of sixty men, coming from the ships which were at the port Napoléon, was sent to Captain Duperré by General Decaen.³⁸²

On the other hand, the Hamelin division, composed of the frigates *Vénus*, *Manche*, and *Astrée*, received orders to proceed immediately to Grand Port. On the 22nd, the *Sirius* joined the *Néréide*. The captains of these ships, counting on an easy victory, set sail to attack us. The two frigates were still far from our line when the *Sirius* ran aground on a reef; the whole night was spent drawing it from this position. On the 23rd, the *Magicienne* and the *Iphigénie* were sighted, anchoring near the *Néréide* and the *Sirius*. The arrival of these two ships gave the enemy a very great superiority since we only had two frigates, a small corvette, and a ship from the East India Company to oppose them. The breeze was fresh and blew from astern; this circumstance, which seemed favorable, constituted a difficulty for the English captains, obliged to maneuver in narrow passes with which they were not familiar. If a grounding occurred, it could have, due to the speed, serious consequences. Finally, the breeze, by raising a little sea in the bay, did not allow the reefs hidden under the water to be seen. It would therefore have been preferable to wait until the next day and to choose, to set sail, the moment when the offshore breeze began to blow. It was all the more necessary for the English to act with prudence since only one vessel, the *Nereide*, had a pilot. The various considerations that we have just set out did not stop our adversaries; In the afternoon, the four ships, led by the *Néréide*, headed for the French line. The *Néréide* ran aground by the port davit of the *Bellone*, at a distance of a cable length; the *Sirius*, which was following it, ran aground, within cannon range, presenting the bow to our ships.³⁸³

The *Magicienne*, straying from the route taken by this frigate, passed it, but while maneuvering to take up her position, she ran aground. The captain of the *Iphigénie*, who was wary of the misfortune of the *Sirius* and the *Magicienne*, dropped anchor within cannon range of our line. The firing began at 5:30. An hour later, the moorings of the *Ceylan* and the *Minerve* were cut; driven by the wind, these two ships ran aground inside the *Bellone*. There were only nine guns left on the *Ceylan* and four on the *Minerve* in position to fire on the enemy. Men and ammunition from the *Minerve* were sent aboard the *Bellone*. At ten thirty, Commander Duperré having been wounded, Captain Bouvet crossed over to the *Bellone*, leaving command of his frigate to Lieutenant Roussin. At eleven o'clock, the enemy was firing only at intervals; an hour later, the firing ceased on both sides. During the night, it was learned from a Frenchman who had swum out of the *Néréide* that the frigate, laden with dead and dying, had lowered its flag. On the 24th, when day broke, a few cannon shots were fired at the *Néréide*, causing an English yacht, which was still afloat, to be brought aboard the frigate. The *Iphigénie* was hauled out to sea while the *Sirius* and the *Magicienne* worked to free themselves from the ground. Giving up on refloating the *Magicienne*, the English evacuated this frigate and left it to the flames; it blew up at eleven o'clock in the evening. On the 25th, the *Sirius* was abandoned, as had been the *Magicienne*, and set on fire. The *Iphigénie*, which had continued to pull in the direction of the island of La Passe, was out of cannon range.³⁸⁴

On the 27th, the *Vénus*, the *Manche*, and the *Astrée* appeared offshore. The captain of the *Iphigénie*, unable to fight these three ships, surrendered his frigate and the Île de la Passe to Hamelin's division. Such was the Battle of Grand Port. This brilliant affair cost us thirty-seven killed and one hundred and twelve wounded; among the former were three officers and a midshipman. The English losses were considerable. Two hundred and thirty men were put out of action on the *Néréide*, seventeen on the *Iphigénie*, and twenty-eight on the *Magicienne*. The *Sirius*, which had run aground far from the French line, had not suffered a single man hit by our fire.

We had to take immediate advantage of the disorganization of the English forces. Captain Bouvet, who had taken command of the *Iphigénie*, set sail, having under his command the frigate *Astrée*, the corvette *Victor* and the brig *Entreprenant*. He sent the *Victor* to Port Napoléon to pick up various items of equipment and supplies necessary for his division. A few days having passed without the corvette reappearing, the *Entreprenant* was left at the rendezvous assigned to the *Victor* and the two frigates moved away. Commander Bouvet was to visit the harbors of Bourbon Island and remove the ships he encountered there. On September 12, at daybreak, the *Astrée* and the *Iphigénie* learned of the *Africaine* of forty, Captain Corbett, which was heading for the harbor of Saint-Denis. The French frigates had arrived within a short distance of this vessel, when the *Boadicea*, which carried Commodore Rowley's guidon, the corvette the *Otter* and the brig the *Staunch* were sighted, leaving the harbor of Saint-Paul. Commander Bouvet ran to the northwest, hoping to find, offshore, the opportunity to fight his adversaries separately.³⁸⁵

The *Africaine*, which had been stranded for some time in the harbor of Saint-Denis, embarked a detachment of troops to reinforce its crew. Officers from the garrison came as volunteers aboard this vessel to assist, or so they believed, in the capture of the French frigates.

At sunset, the *Africaine* was astern and to windward of our frigates, within great cannon range, and the *Boadicea* was about two leagues in our waters. The *Otter* and the *Staunch* had disappeared. During the night, which was dark, our ships lost sight of the enemy several times. At three o'clock in the morning, in a clearing, the *Africaine* was sighted, half a gunshot away, abeam of the *Astrée*, which was behind the *Iphigénie*. Captain Corbett, assuming that the *Boadicea* was not far off, and fearing, on the other hand, that the French frigates might manage to reach a port on the Ile-de-France, decided to attack us. He sent his broadside to the *Astrée*, which immediately returned fire. Captain Corbett, mortally wounded at the start of the action, handed over command of his frigate to his first lieutenant. At the same time, the *Astrée*, which had damage to its sails, took in some sail and stood to leeward of the *Iphigénie* to repair them. The men on the deck of the *Africaine* gave a cheer, soon repeated by the entire crew. The officer, who had replaced Captain Corbett, already seeing the *Astrée* as reduced, headed towards the *Iphigénie*, placing himself in its waters. The guns on board the English frigate had been pointed, in advance, at extreme hunting.³⁸⁶

When the *Africaine* touched the crown of the French frigate with her spear [bowspar], she launched into the wind and sent her broadside at her adversary. This was the moment Commander Bouvet had been waiting for; according to his orders, the guns had been aimed full sail and on the horizon. As soon as the English ship had made its luffing move, he had the helm set to leeward and the sails reefed. "Surprised thus, yard by yard," Commander Bouvet later wrote, "under the direct and rolling fire of the old gunners of the *Minerve* and the *Bellone* who were manning my battery, this frigate, having to bring back the guns it had discharged obliquely, was never able to completely succeed." Soon convinced that this artillery battle would turn to his disadvantage, the captain of the *Africaine* attempted several times to board the *Iphigénie*. Commander Bouvet, judging from the vicious musket fire that the English frigate had a large crew, foiled this calculation. At four thirty in the morning, the *Africaine* lowered her flag. This frigate, which was completely dismasted, had forty-nine killed and one hundred and fourteen wounded; the *Iphigénie* had nine killed and thirty-three wounded, and the *Astrée* one killed and two wounded.

When daylight broke, the *Boadicea* was in sight at a short distance. Commodore Rowley did not think it prudent to attack us; he kept to windward, out of cannon range, waiting for the *Otter* and the *Staunch*. In the afternoon, joined by these two ships, he approached our frigates. The *Astrée* had not yet executed the order given by Captain Bouvet to take the *Africaine* in tow. The *Iphigénie*, having fallen to leeward, was hastily repairing the damage to her mast; moreover, having left the Grand Port with incomplete supplies, she no longer had a sufficient quantity of cannonballs to begin a new fight.³⁸⁷

In this situation, Commander Bouvet signaled the *Astrée* to abandon the *Africaine* and rejoin him. The two frigates anchored on September 22nd at the Northwest Port; they had captured, upon landing, the *Aurora*, a sixteen-ship corvette belonging to the East India Company. The frigate the *Africaine*, which had just suffered such a major disaster, had left England several months earlier, bound for India. Learning of the various events of the Battle of Grand Port at Rodrigue Island, where he had put into water to take on water, Captain Corbett hastened to put to sea to join Commodore Rowley. On September 17, a large vessel having been sighted off Port Louis, the *Venus* and the *Victor* set sail. The ship in sight was the forty-gun *Ceylan*, sent from Madras to reinforce Commodore Rowley's division. General Abercombry, who had come from India to command the expedition the English intended to send to the Isle-de-France, was on board this frigate. Shortly after midnight, the *Venus*, leaving the *Victor* behind, joined the enemy vessel and attacked it within pistol range. At five o'clock in the morning, the *Ceylan*, completely disabled, lowered its flag. This frigate only had sections of lower masts left; the *Venus* had lost her mizzenmast and her topmasts. The *Victor*, having arrived near the combatants, took the English frigate in tow. At daybreak, the three vessels were sighted by the *Boadicea* which was anchored in the harbor of Saint-Denis. Commodore Rowley set sail in all haste, followed by the *Otter* and the *Staunch*.³⁸⁸

The *Venus*, in its current state, could hardly sustain another battle. Wanting to save the *Victor*, Captain Hamelin ordered the ship to cast off the *Ceylan's* tow and head for the Île-de-France. As soon as the *Victor* had moved away, the *Venus* set out to meet the *Boadicea*; after an engagement lasting just under an hour, the French frigate lowered its flag.

On November 29, a large fleet appeared in sight of the Île-de-France; it included a ship, twelve frigates, corvettes, avisos, and transports, making a total of seventy vessels, on which was a landing force of about ten thousand men. The British troops were put ashore on the 29th, twelve miles northeast of Port Louis. The forces at the disposal of the Governor General did not exceed four thousand men, of whom two thousand belonged to the National Guard. A battalion of five hundred sailors was formed with the crews of the disarmed vessels. After having had several engagements with the enemy, in which soldiers, sailors and militiamen bravely performed their duty, General Decaen had to retreat. Fearing to be forced into Port Napoleon, and not wanting, on the other hand, to expose the inhabitants to the consequences of an assault, the general entered into negotiations with the enemy. On December 2, he signed a capitulation by virtue of which the English took possession of the colony. Our troops, retaining their arms and their flags, were to be transported to France at the expense of the British government; the same treatment was applied to officers and crews of warships and privateers.³⁸⁹

However, the vessels, whether state-owned or commercial, became the property of the victors. Thus, France lost a colony from which, for so many years, warships and privateers had departed, inflicting considerable damage on Angeois trade.

II

On February 3, 1811, the forty-four-ship frigates *Renommée*, *Néréide*, and *Clorinde*, captained by Roquebert, Lemareshuier, and de Saint-Cricq, departed from Brest for the Île-de-France region. Each of these vessels carried two hundred soldiers and supplies. Captain Roquebert, of the *Renommée*, who had command of the three frigates, was to go to Batavia if he learned, upon his arrival, that the Ile-de-France had fallen into the hands of the English. The French division appeared on the afternoon of May 6, in sight of the Grand Port. The island of La Passe, on which the tricolor flag was flying, did not respond to the signals of our ships. When night fell, two boats were sent ashore. One of them, while landing on the beach, broke up; the other returned announcing that the English were masters of the island. On the 7th, the French division chased off the frigates *Phæbe* and *Galatea* and the brig *Race Horse*. The English ships having been lost from sight, on the 9th, Captain Roquebert headed for Bourbon Island with the intention of attempting a raid on a coastal post which he assumed to be weakly defended.³⁹⁰

The three frigates arrived at their destination on the night of the 11th. Officers sent on reconnaissance, having declared that the state of the sea made any landing impossible, the French ships headed for Madagascar. They anchored on May 19th off Tamatave, which had fallen into British hands several months earlier; the enemy garrison surrendered, and the fort was occupied by a French detachment. On the 20th, the forty-four-gun frigates *Astræa*, the thirty-eight-ton *Phæbe* and *Galatea*, and the eighteen-ton brig *Race Horse*, under the command of Captain Shomberg of the *Astræa*, were sighted. The French frigates set sail and headed out to meet the enemy. The breeze, which was light and variable with alternating calms, made all maneuvers difficult. When the battle began, around four o'clock in the afternoon, the *Néréide*, which had outstripped its convoys, found itself, for a moment, exposed to the fire of the English division. At eight o'clock in the evening, this frigate, whose masts were badly damaged, fell to leeward. It had seventy-seven men out of action. The *Renommée* and the *Clorinde* having approached the *Néréide*, without being followed by the English ships, the firing ceased. Captain Roquebert, after ordering Lieutenant Ponée, who had replaced Captain Lemaesquier, killed during the battle, to stay close to land, moved away with his frigate and the *Clorinde*. At nine thirty, the latter vessel put across to rescue a man who had fallen overboard. Captain Roquebert, having continued on his way, without worrying about his safety, found himself, around ten o'clock, in the presence of the *Astræa*, the *Phæbe* and the *Race Horse*.³⁹¹

After a very fierce battle, which lasted about half an hour, the *Renommée* lowered its flag. This frigate had ninety-three men out of action; Captain Roquebert and Midshipman Lalonde were among the dead. The *Clorinde* had hastened, upon hearing the cannon, to re-hoist its boats and make sail, but upon its arrival at the scene of the action, the firing had ceased. The *Astræa* and the *Phæbe*, having set out to rejoin his ship, Captain de Saint-Cricq moved away; the next day at daybreak, not seeing any sails, he headed for the Seychelles, where the *Clorinde* anchored on May 30. This frigate had suffered one man killed and six wounded on the 20th. Eighteen men had been put out of action on the *Astræa*, thirty-one on the *Phæbe*, and sixty-two on the *Galatea*.

The *Néréide* had remained close to land during the night of the 20th, as ordered by the commander of the *Renommée*. By daybreak, with the French and English ships no longer in sight, Lieutenant Ponée dropped anchor in the harbor of Tamatave to make urgent repairs. After the surrender of the *Renommée* and the disappearance of the *Clorinde*, Captain Shomberg also headed for that point. On the evening of the 24th, he learned from the *Race Horse* that the *Néréide* was at Tamatave. The English arrived on the 25th, in sight of the French frigate, and summoned Captain Ponée to surrender his ship and the fort. This officer responded by proposing a capitulation under the terms of which officers, sailors and soldiers were to be sent back to France at the expense of the English government. Although he considered himself certain of the result, if the action took place, Captain Shomberg was not unaware of the difficulties presented by entering the harbor under fire from the *Néréide* and the fort.³⁹²

He accepted the conditions of the captain of the *Néréide*.

Instead of going to Batavia, as his instructions prescribed, Captain de Saint-Cricq headed for Brest, leaving the Seychelles. The *Clorinde* entered the Iroise on September 24, closely followed by a seventy-four-gun ship. Fortunately for this frigate, the English vessel lost its main topmast and foretopmast in a squall. The *Clorinde* anchored the same day in Brest harbor. On March 18, 1812, the captain of the *Clorinde*, brought before a court martial, "was found guilty of disobedience to the orders of his commander, dismissed, declared unworthy of service, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment and degradation of the Legion of Honor."

The forty-four-ship frigates *Favorite*, *Danaé*, and *Flore*, captained by Captains Dubourdieu, Villon, and Péridier; the Italian frigates *Corona*, *Carolina*, and *Bellona*, captained by Captains Pasqualino, Dodero, and Buratowich; a brig, two schooners, and a chebeck, left Ancona on March 11, 1811. This division, under the command of Captain Dubourdieu of the *Favorite*, carried landing troops commanded by an aide-de-camp to the Viceroy of Italy, Colonel Giffenga. The aim of this expedition was to conquer the island of Lissa, which had become the station centre of England's naval forces in the Adriatic. At daybreak on the 12th, the Franco-Italian division was a short distance from Port Saint-George when the *Active*, a 48-gun, the *Amphion*, the *Cerberus* and the *Volage*, a 40-gun, were sighted. Captain Dubourdieu headed towards these frigates, covering himself with sails.³⁹³

The *Favorite*, which was proceeding very well, arrived within cannon range of the enemy before the other ships of the Franco-Italian division were able to support it; it found itself, for some time, exposed to the fire of the English line. Captain Dubourdieu attempted to escape the awkward position he had placed himself in when boarding the *Amphion*. The *Favorite* was a short distance from this frigate when it received a broadside of grapeshot that put a large number of men out of action. Captain Dubourdieu was killed. A new boarding attempt, made shortly afterward by his second-in-command, Frigate Captain Lamarre La Meillerie, was no more successful. As the French and Italian ships successively entered the line, the action became general. The two divisions were running close-hauled, their tacks to starboard, the French to windward of the English. The route they were following led them to land, to which they were very close. Around ten o'clock in the morning, the English tacked luff for luff all at once; the French imitated this maneuver, with the exception of the *Favorite*, which was unable to do so due to damage to its masts. Continuing to run on the starboard tack, this frigate ran aground. The English ships were well formed and maneuvered with precision, while no order reigned in the Franco-Italian division. Around noon, the *Bellona* lowered its flag; shortly after, the *Flore* moved away from the battlefield, followed by the *Danaé* and the *Caroline*. The *Corona*, hit by two enemy frigates, lowered its flag. The *Favorite* was evacuated and given over to the flames; The crew seized a small vessel on which it joined the *Flore*, the *Danaé* and the *Caroline* which were anchored at Lesina.³⁹⁴

The losses of the Franco-Italian division were considerable. The *Favorite* had 130 men out of action; the *Flore* 140; and the *Danaé* 75. The Italian ships had been no less mistreated than ours. The number of dead on the four English ships was 50, and the number of wounded 150.

The serious setback we had just suffered was the result of the thoughtless conduct of Captain Dubourdieu. Although very brave, he had shown none of the qualities necessary to lead the ships he commanded. As soon as he saw the enemy, he attacked them with his frigate, without worrying about what was happening behind him. However, the ships of his division were in disorder and separated from each other by a fairly large gap. Captain Dubourdieu, to whom the commander of the troops, Colonel Giffenga, asked whether it would not be preferable to wait until the division was fully rallied and in line before attacking the enemy, replied to the commander: "This is the finest day of our lives. Two of these ships must belong to us; if we delay, they will go away." "Whatever mistakes Captain Dubourdieu made," wrote Colonel Giffenga to the Viceroy of Italy, "his loss is deeply regretted. One could not have been a more courageous officer, nor a more skilled sailor, but the sight of the enemy had put him out of his mind." Misfortune was to pursue the ships of this division. Some time later, the *Flore* was lost at Chioggia, and in this unfortunate event, seventy-two men perished. The *Danae* sank in the harbor of Trieste in September 1842; the only man who was saved could not give any information about the cause of this disaster.³⁹⁵

The brig *Abeille*, after completing a mission in Corsica, was returning to Livorno when, on March 26, it encountered the English brig *Alacrity*. As soon as the two ships were within cannon range, action ensued. After three-quarters of an hour of very fierce combat, within pistol range, *Alacrity* lowered its flag. The English brig had fifteen killed and twenty wounded, including the captain and all the officers; the number of killed on *Abeille* was seven and the number of wounded twelve. The *Abeille's* armament consisted of twenty twenty-four-pounder carronades; the *Alacrity* carried twenty thirty-two-pounder carronades. This affair brought great honour to the young officer, Ensign de Mackau, who was provisionally commanding the *Abeille*. On 27 June, the eighteen-ship brig, the *Tactique*, under Captain Hurtel, left Port-Vendres to meet the sixteen-ship brig, the *Guadeloupe*, which could be seen offshore. After a two-hour engagement, the English brig moved away, abandoning the battlefield to its adversary. The damage to the masts, which the *Tactique* had suffered, did not allow it to follow the enemy vessel. The *Tactique* had seven killed and several wounded; on the English brig, one man killed and thirteen wounded, ten of them seriously. The French felucca* *Linotte*, which was in sight during the engagement between the two brigs, had been unable to join the *Tactique* in time to take part in the action.³⁹⁶

* A felucca is a traditional wooden sailing boat with a single latern rigged sail used in the Mediterranean

On the morning of November 29, the forty-four-gun frigates *Pauline* and *Pomone*, captained by Captains Montfort and Rosamel, and the twenty-four-gun flute *Persane*, captained by Captain Satie, were driven off by the forty-gun frigates *Alceste*, *Active*, and *Unité*. The *Persane*, having requested and obtained freedom of maneuver, separated from the two frigates; she was followed by *Unité*. The *Alceste*, outpacing the *Active*, engaged the *Pomone*, which was behind the *Pauline*. With the first volleys of fire, the main topmast of the English frigate fell, obscuring part of the battery with its debris. The captain of the *Pauline* did not think it appropriate to take advantage of this situation to attack the *Alceste*; he continued on his way, firing at this vessel from a distance. At the moment when the *Active* rejoined its convoy, a new enemy, the corvette *King's Fisher*, was sighted. The *Alceste* and the *Active*, one placed to starboard and the other to port of the *Pomone*, fought this vessel within pistol range. The French frigate defended itself with the greatest energy, but, after a three-hour struggle against these two adversaries, it was forced to lower its flag. The *Pauline* had only taken a very small part in the combat between the *Pomone* and the two enemy frigates; passing to windward and quite far from the English vessels, it moved away. The *Pomone* had forty-eight men out of action; she had four feet of water in the hold, the rudder wheel broken and all her masts cut off at deck height. The English losses amounted to eight killed and twenty-five wounded on the *Active*, and seven killed and thirteen wounded on the *Alceste*. The flute *Persane*, hit at four o'clock in the evening by the frigate *Unité*, lowered her flag after exchanging a few broadsides. The *Pauline* anchored at Brindisi. Captain Monfort, accused of having abandoned the *Pomone*, appeared before a court-martial which declared him incapable of command.³⁹⁷

By a decree dated December 24, 1812, he was struck from the navy's lists.

On August 24, a convoy, escorted by the twelve-gun brig *Teaser*, was anchored at the entrance to the Gironde, a little inside Pointe de la Coubre. Two frigates were sighted; they hoisted the tricolor ensign and fired a cannon shot. The captain of the *Teaser*, Lieutenant Papineau, sent pilots to them in one of his boats. The vessels reported, which were none other than the English frigates *Diana* and *Sémiramis*, dropped anchor between Cordouan and Pointe de Grave. When night fell, the two frigates detached their boats to capture the merchant ships, anchored near the Royan stationary, the sixteen-gun brig the *Pluvier*. Several hours after their departure, the English boats, struggling against the current, had made little progress. Fearing that he would not complete his operation before daybreak, the officer commanding the expedition returned aboard the frigates. They set sail the next day at six o'clock in the morning. Although the boat from the *Teaser*, sent out the day before, had not returned, Lieutenant Papineau remained convinced that he was in the presence of two French frigates. The captain of the *Pluvier*, Lieutenant Dubourg, no less confident, went aboard the *Diana*, and it was only when he set foot on the deck of this frigate that he recognized his error. The *Diana*, hoisting the English colours, boarded *Teaser* and threw a detachment on board the brig, which took control of it. At the same time, the *Sémiramis* was approaching the *Pluvier*.³⁹⁸

The officer commanding this brig, in Captain Dubourg's absence, had the cables cut; the *Pluvier*, pursued by the *Sémiramis*'s cannonballs, ran aground about half a mile from one of our batteries. Enemy boats rowed toward this brig; the fire from the shore battery and that of the *Pluvier* did not stop them. The French brig was evacuated; after futilely attempting to refloat it, the English set it on fire. The *Sémiramis* and the *Diana* left the Gironde with the *Teaser*.

On December 27, 1811, a convoy, pursued by five barges belonging to the division that was blockading the port of Rochefort, took refuge in the bottom of the bay between La Rochelle and the island of Aix. The wind was blowing very freshly from the northwest and the sea was beginning to rise. Captain Jacob, who commanded the Rochefort division, allowed the English boats to advance towards the land; when they appeared to him to be sufficiently compromised, he sent three gunboats, commanded by Lieutenant Duré, and four boats, under the command of Ensign Constantin, to cut off their retreat. The enemy detached a ship, a frigate and a brig to protect the return of their boats. The boat, which was mounted by Ensign Constantin, boarded an English barge and seized it; a second barge was captured by the gunboats. The other three, hit by our projectiles and on the verge of sinking, were thrown ashore. This incident cost the English 118 men killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

On March 2, 1811, Rear Admiral Emériau, shortly afterward appointed Vice Admiral, was placed in command of the Toulon squadron.³⁹⁹

His predecessor, Admiral Allemand, called to command a squadron that the government intended to assemble at Brest, received orders to lead four ships from Lorient to the latter port. Admiral Allemand set sail on the night of March 8, 1812, with the ships *Eylau*, on which he had his flag, *Golymen*, *Marengo*, and *Vétéran*. After remaining offshore for a few days, the Lorient division headed for Brest, where it anchored on the evening of the 29th. The English, informed of its departure, had set in motion several squadrons, between which it fortunately passed. The surveillance exercised by the enemy on our coasts made it more difficult every day for the ships that managed to reach the open sea to return. On the morning of May 22, the forty-four-gun frigates *Ariane* and *Andromaque* and the brig *Mameluck*, which were returning to France after a cruise to the Azores and Bermuda, recognized the *Penmarks*. They were heading for Lorient when a large vessel, the eighty-gun ship *Northumberland*, was sighted. The French division continued its route. The *Andromaque*, on board which was an officer who believed himself capable of piloting the frigates, took the lead of the line. The *Mameluck* was given freedom of maneuver. The battle began around three o'clock in the afternoon between the two frigates and the English ship; It had lasted for an hour when the *Andromaque* ran aground on the northern part of the reef known as the Grasie base. The officer who was directing the frigates had been killed. The *Ariane*, although she had maneuvered promptly to move away from the route followed by her convoy, hit the ground and remained aground; finally, the *Mameluck*, which continued to run towards Lorient, threw herself onto the coast.⁴⁰⁰

The ship *Northumberland* and the brig *Growler* anchored and opened a very heavy fire on the frigates. As the tide subsided, they broke and filled with water. The maritime prefect of Lorient, who arrived on the scene, ordered them to be evacuated and set on fire. The *Mameluck*, refloated, entered Lorient. Captains Férétier and Morice, of the *Ariane* and the *Andromaque*, were brought before a court martial and declared unfit for command.

The eighty-strong ship *Rivoli*, built in Venice, having completed its fitting-out, was ordered to sail to Ancona. On February 21, 1812, this vessel, lifted on camels, set sail from the Spignon harbor, towed by boats. At five o'clock in the evening, it dropped anchor outside the banks. The commander of the *Rivoli*, Captain Barré, could only reach his destination by hiding his course from the superior forces that the English, informed of its imminent departure, maintained in the gulf. As soon as it had been relieved of the camels, the *Rivoli* made its preparations for departure; it set sail on the 22nd, at six o'clock in the morning, with the Italian brigs the *Mercure* of sixteen, the *Mameluck* and the *Iéna*, of eight, which were charged with lighting its route. During the night, around three o'clock in the morning, the *Victorious* of eighty and the brig *Weazel* of eighteen were sighted; the latter building joined the *Mercure* and attacked it. The engagement had lasted for three-quarters of an hour when the *Mercure* blew up; the crew perished except for three men who were saved by the *Weazel*. At three thirty in the morning, the fight began between the *Rivoli* and the *Victorious*.⁴⁰¹

A fire that broke out aboard the French vessel was quickly extinguished; at eight o'clock, two guns from the lower battery exploded, putting a large number of men out of action. The mizzenmast had been knocked down by enemy missiles, and the mainmast and foremast were on the verge of falling. The chopped rigging, the tattered sails, and the broken rudder wheel no longer allowed for maneuvering. The *Weazel*, whose masts were intact, had taken up position forward of the French vessel, which the *Victorious* was fighting on the port quarter. The *Rivoli* suffered 150 killed and 208 wounded; Captain Barré had the ensign lowered. While our losses were so considerable, the *Victorious* had only twenty-five killed and ninety wounded; the *Weazel* had not a single man out of action. The lack of success of the defense was easily explained; besides the fact that the *Rivoli* was leaving the harbor, the majority of her crew had been formed with conscripts from the Roman States, sailors from Trieste and the Straits of Cattaro, and Illyrians.

The brig the *Renard* and the schooner the *Goéland*, commanded by Lieutenants Baudin and Saint-Bélin, left Genoa on June 11, escorting fourteen ships carrying naval munitions to Toulon. On June 15, the convoy was chased off the Sainte-Marguerite Islands by the ship the *America*, the frigate the *Curaçao*, and the eighteen-man brig the *Swallow*. The next day, the ship and the frigate were at a great distance, while the brig had come closer. Captain Baudin, after giving the order to the merchant ships to enter Saint-Tropez, went to the *Swallow*, followed by the *Goéland*.⁴⁰²

The battle began at one o'clock in the afternoon, broadside to broadside. The *Goéland*, having had its rudder dismounted from the first volleys, was able to play only a very minor part in the action. The engagement, sustained on both sides with extreme vigor, had lasted for forty-five minutes when the English brig, leaving the wind behind, headed towards his division. Captain Baudin could not pursue it without compromising himself. He set sail for Saint-Tropez, which he was able to reach, despite the poor condition of its masts; the *Goéland* accompanied him to this port. The *Renard* had fourteen men killed and twenty-eight wounded; the *Goéland* one killed and three wounded, and the English brig six killed and seventeen wounded. The *Renard* carried fourteen twenty-four-pounder carronades and two eight-pounder guns, the *Goéland* four six-pounder guns and four twelve-pounder howitzers, and the *Swallow* twenty-four thirty-two-pounder carronades. Captain Baudin concluded the report he sent to the minister on the battle of June 16 by saying: "I hope that Your Excellency will not accuse me of misplaced temerity. Our enemies never give us an opportunity to fight them on equal terms; we must tear them away..... My crew was singularly excited. Twice already, in the last six weeks, we had tried in vain to engage this same brig without the ship accompanying it having the generosity to let us fight alone."

The *Gloire*, a forty-four-ship, captained by Roussin, left Le Havre on December 16, 1812, and anchored in Brest harbor on February 27. Captain Roussin had captured thirteen merchant ships, two war brigs, the *Spy*, a ten-gun ship, and the *Linnet*, a sixteen-gun ship, and taken two hundred and eighty prisoners.⁴⁰³

The forty-four-ton frigates, the *Aréthuse* and the *Rubis*, captains Bouvet and Ollivier, having left France at the end of November 1812, cruised off Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands. From there, Captain Bouvet, who had command of both vessels, proceeded to the Loss Islands, a little north of the Sierra Leone River. Upon landing, a brig, the *Daring*, sent a boat to board the frigates, which he mistook for ships of his own nation. Not seeing his boat return and receiving no response to the signals he made, the English captain ran his vessel aground on Tamara Island and set it ablaze. After refueling, the French frigates set sail. On February 1, they were tacking to reach the open sea when the *Aréthuse* touched a shoal and dismantled its rudder. The frigates dropped anchor; a violent wind having risen during the night, both drove. Captain Bouvet installed a makeshift rudder, moved away from the land and anchored. When day broke, it was learned that the *Rubis* had been lost on the northern tip of Tamara Island; this vessel, unable to be refloated, was set on fire. Captain Ollivier and his crew embarked on a prize, the *Serra*, taken a few days earlier. On February 6, the rudder repairs were being completed on board the *Aréthuse* when the forty-eight-strong English frigate, the *Amelia*, under Captain Irby, was sighted. The *Aréthuse* set sail and headed to meet the enemy. Captain Irby, having been warned by the captain of the *Daring* of the presence of two French frigates on the coast, headed out to sea to draw the *Aréthuse* away from her convoy. The weather having become very foggy, the *Amelia* was no longer seen, and was seen again the next morning.⁴⁰⁴

At nightfall, the English frigate let go and steered towards the *Aréthuse*. The battle began at 7:45, alongside. "Our ships," wrote Captain Bouvet, "seemed bound by a column of fire. We were boarded for several minutes and, for an hour and a half, the two ships remained within pistol range, broadside to broadside. There were swabs torn off and saber cuts delivered through the gun ports." At 11:00, with the *Amelia* out of cannon range, the firing ceased; the fog, which rolled in, hid the two ships from sight of each other. On the 8th, at daybreak, the English frigate was sighted moving away under full sail. Captain Bouvet, having pursued it in vain during the day, returned to the Loss Islands to pick up the crew of the *Rubis*. The number of killed on the *Aréthuse* was twenty and the number of wounded eighty-eight; the *Amelia* had fifty-one dead and one hundred and forty-one wounded. The *Amelia* carried twenty-eight eighteen-gun cannons and twenty thirty-two carronades. Captain Bouvet having had two eighteen-gun cannons placed in the hold, placed on the front of the battery, in a position such that it was not possible to use them, the armament of the *Aréthuse*, on the day of the battle, consisted of twenty-six eighteen-gun cannons, two eight-guns and fourteen twenty-four carronades. The captain of the *Aréthuse* could consider the success he had just achieved as his own personal achievement. Having left Nantes a few months earlier with a crew, as he says in his Memoirs, "composed mainly of puny and ill-disposed conscripts", he had transformed this personnel and made his frigate into a military vessel.⁴⁰⁵

Full of confidence in such a leader, the young crew of the *Aréthuse* had approached the enemy with the hope of victory. It is certain that the *Amelia* would have been captured if the *Aréthuse* had been able to reach her. Captain Bouvet entered Saint-Malo on April 19, 1813, with only ten days' worth of provisions left.

III

For several years, the French government had been working to increase the number of vessels making up the squadrons assembled in our harbors. In addition to the Texel squadron, which consisted of seven vessels, we had eighteen vessels in the Scheldt at the end of 1812, four of which were manned by Danes. Rear-Admiral Troude commanded two ships at Cherbourg and Rear-Admiral Hamelin five at Brest. The Rochefort division, under the command of Captain Jacob, had five ships and the Toulon squadron, headed by Admiral Émériaux, nineteen. These ships, whose crews were composed of conscripts, were trained in the harbors. One can understand the little value of ships with such personnel and trained in these conditions; but the superiority of the English navy, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the disappearance of the sailors of the classes did not allow us, unless we gave up having a navy, to act otherwise.⁴⁰⁶

This state of affairs could not be maintained in 1813. The struggle we were waging against the European coalition forced the government to devote all of France's resources to the army. The four marine artillery regiments were placed at the disposal of the Minister of War; in the Scheldt, seven vessels were disarmed, including those manned by Danish crews.

On November 5, twelve vessels, under the command of Admiral Emériau, left Toulon for exercises. The bulk of the English army was offshore; the light squadron, which was keeping close to land, withdrew before us. At the moment when Admiral Emériau was heading to return to her anchorage, the enemy's vanguard found itself, due to a change of wind, in a position to cannonade our rearguard. The rearguard of our line, the seventy-four-gun *Agamemnon*, barely responded to the English fire. Rear-Admiral Cosmao, who had his flag on the three-decker *Wagram*, seeing the critical position of this vessel, let the ship bear away and freed it. The *Agamemnon*, keeping on deck the number of men necessary for the maneuver, had only been able to send about a hundred men to her batteries. Rear Admiral Cosmao set sail from Toulon on 12 February 1814 with the eighty-strong ships *Sceptre*, on which he had his flag, *Trident* and *Romulus*, and the forty-four-strong frigates *Médée*, *Adrienne* and *Dryade*. The French division was heading to meet the ship *Scipion*, expected from Genoa; at daybreak the next day, it was about eighteen miles south of Cape Bénat, when the lookouts reported fifteen sails in the west-southwest.⁴⁰⁷

The winds were blowing from the east. Rear Admiral Cosmao immediately set sail for Toulon, passing by the Hyères Islands. At eleven thirty, the *Sceptre*, the leader of the French line, appeared out of the small channel; it was followed by the *Médée*, *Dryade*, *Trident*, *Adrienne*, and *Romulus*. At thirty minutes past twelve, the advanced ships of the English squadron began to exchange cannonballs with ours. The *Boyne*, a hundred and ten-gun ship, crossing our line between the *Adrienne* and the *Trident*, positioned itself abeam of our rearguard, the *Romulus*. The commander of the latter vessel, Captain Rolland, threatened with being fought on both sides, which would have made his position very critical, immediately came to starboard and continued his route, hugging the land very closely. The *Boyne* and a second three-decker, the *Caledonia*, cannonaded the *Romulus*, which responded vigorously to the fire of its two adversaries. At Cape Brun, the English vessels, recalled by Admiral Pellew, abandoned the pursuit. The action had been underway for three-quarters of an hour. The *Boyne*, whose masts were badly damaged, was taken in tow by a frigate; this three-decker had two killed and forty wounded. The *Caledonia* had not lost a man and its damage was of no importance. The French ship, whose rigging was torn and sails in tatters, had its port side riddled with cannonballs. Captain Rolland, wounded at the start of the action, had been replaced by Frigate Captain Biot.⁴⁰⁸

The *Romulus* had seventeen killed, including one officer, Ensign Tissot, and sixty-seven wounded; the *Trident* had one killed; the *Adrienne* had one killed and seven wounded; and the *Médée* had two killed and two wounded. Among the *Romulus's* wounded were four officers and a midshipman; two officers, Lieutenant Poucel and Ensign Infernet, died of their wounds. At the moment when the *Romulus* was about to be cut off by the vanguard of the English army, there were seventeen ships at anchor in the harbor of Toulon. We must add that these ships, after having provided detachments to supplement the strength of Cosmao's division, were left almost without crews. According to the squadron commander's report, the forts of Carqueiranne and Sainte-Marguerite had taken part in this affair; the fort at Cap Brun had opened fire as soon as the English came within range.

Admiral Emériau received orders to form four regiments of fifteen hundred men each and to land one thousand men to arm the coastal forts. Shortly after, his ships were disarmed and their crews placed at the disposal of the Governor of Toulon. Admiral Missiessy detached part of his crews to Berg-op-Zoom, Flushing, and Breskens and to the forts protecting the river between Lille and Antwerp. At the beginning of February 1814, the latter place was invested by General Bulow's army corps and General Graham's division. The enemy erected batteries directed against the part of the rampart that covered the basin in which the ships and flotilla vessels were gathered. The enclosure at this point was manned by the sailors still aboard Admiral Missiessy's ships. The enemy works having been destroyed several times by our fire, the Anglo-Prussian corps converted the siege into a blockade.⁴⁰⁹

Military events forced Captain Régnauld, who commanded a division in the Gironde, to burn the ship *Regulus*, three brigs, and several small vessels. Rochefort's division returned to the Charente. Rear-Admirals Troude and Hamelin remained in the harbors of Cherbourg and Brest. One of the vessels belonging to the Brest squadron, the *Goly-men*, surprised by the calm, returned to anchor after reconnoitering a vessel offshore, and was lost on the Basse-Goudre, located between Roche-Maingan and Feuillettes.

Sending a few ships on a cruise was the last effort of the Navy Department. Two frigates set out together with orders to do as much harm as they could to the enemy. The officer, who was given command of the two ships, had the choice of cruising points; he remained at sea for as long as he deemed appropriate and returned to the port which seemed to him, depending on the weather and circumstances, to be the most accessible. The *Iphigénie* and the *Alcmène* of forty-four, captains Emeric and Ducrest de Villeneuve, were chased off the Canaries on January 16 by the *Venerable* of seventy-four. When night fell, the two frigates ceased to see each other. At six thirty, the *Venerable*, arriving by the starboard quarter of the *Alcmène*, ordered the frigate to surrender. Captain Bougainville, taking advantage of his position to windward, made a sudden arrival; he hoped to break the bowsprit of the *Venerable* and thus make it impossible for that vessel to follow him. The English captain having given the order to imitate the maneuver of the *Alcmène*, the two vessels found themselves side by side; the French frigate was taken by boarding.⁴¹⁰

The ships found themselves alongside; the French frigate was boarded. On the 19th, during the day, the *Iphigénie* again sighted the *Venerable*, which gave chase. The weather was dark and squally. The *Iphigénie* could escape under cover of darkness, but only on the condition that it maneuvered quickly and made sail. "I had little means," wrote Captain Emeric in his report, "with a crew composed of novices or conscripts and about a hundred Dutch, Hamburgers, and Flemish who, in the afternoon, rushed between decks to pack their bags and whom my officers, midshipmen, and masters were forced to bring up with saber blows." "On the 20th, when day broke, the *Venerable* had closed in and was soon within cannon range. The *Iphigénie*, coming across, fired several volleys at her "without apparent success," wrote Captain Emeric, "our gunners had so little experience. They were young sailors with six months' service." The *Iphigénie*, joined alongside by the English ship, lowered its flag.

The frigates *Clorinde* and *Cérès*, captains Denis Lagarde and Bougainville, had left Brest at the beginning of December 1813; driven out on the day of their departure by superior forces, they had separated. On January 5, 1814, the *Ceres* was sighted near the Cape Verde Islands by the English frigates *Niger* and *Tagus*. After a chase, during which the three frigates covered eighty leagues, the *Ceres* was joined and attacked by *Tagus*. The battle had lasted for an hour when the French flag was lowered; the *Niger*, which arrived under full sail, was about to open fire on the *Ceres*.⁴¹¹

This frigate had a few men slightly wounded. Captain Denis Lagarde spent some time cruising in the vicinity of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands; a leak and damage to the masts prompted him to return to France. On February 25, the *Clorinde* was 130 miles west of the Penmarks, with winds blowing very fresh from the southwest, when the forty-eight-gun *Eurotas* was sighted. At 4:30, combat began within pistol range between the two frigates. A little before 7:00, the English ship, as close as a pontoon, ceased fighting. As the *Clorinde*, which had already lost her foremast and her mizzen topmast, was trying to close in on the English frigate, her mainmast fell, taking the mizzenmast with it. This was the situation when two ships appeared heading towards the scene of the battle.

Captain Denis Lagarde let the wind come down and immediately set to work installing some sails on the wreckage of his masting. The next day, at daybreak, the *Clorinde* was joined by the forty-two-gun *Dryad* and the eighteen-gun brig *Achates*; after a very short engagement, she lowered her flag. Captain Denis Lagarde had been wounded. In her fight with the *Eurotas*, the *Clorinde* had twenty-three killed and fifty-nine wounded; on board the English frigate, the number killed was twenty and the number wounded forty.

The *Etoile* and the *Sultane* of forty-four, captains Philibert and Dupetit-Thouars, were in port at Mayo Island when the frigates of forty-two, the *Créole* and the *Astræa*, were sighted.⁴¹²

The French frigates set sail and advanced to meet the enemy; the *Sultane* engaged the *Créole* and the *Etoile* fought the *Astræa*. Two hours after the start of the action, the *Créole* ceased firing and sailed away, followed by the *Astræa*. The French frigates, which had suffered serious damage, returned to Mayo Island for repairs. The *Sultane* had lost her foremast, mainmast, and mizzenmast; she had nineteen killed and thirty-two wounded. Captains Philibert and Dupetit-Thouars, informed of the presence of a ship and several frigates at La Praya, set sail as soon as their ships were ready to put to sea. The *Etoile* and the *Sultane* were on their way back to France when, on March 26, in foggy weather, about twelve leagues from the island of Bas, an eighty-strong ship, the *Hannibal*, a forty-two-strong frigate, the *Hebrus*, and a sixteen-strong brig, the *Sparrow*, were sighted. Captain Philibert signaled freedom of maneuver to his convoy and moved away, followed by the *Hebrus* and the *Sparrow*. The *Sultane*, hit by the *Hannibal*, fired several volleys at this ship; unable to unrig it, she lowered her flag. At about three o'clock in the morning, the frigate *Hebrus* was a short distance from the *Etoile*. Captain Philibert was unaware of its position; not wanting to run the risk of throwing himself ashore, he headed towards the enemy vessel. After two and a half hours of stubborn combat, the *Etoile*, which was on the point of sinking, lowered its flag. The losses it had suffered in the fighting of January 24 and March 27 amounted to forty-seven men killed and eighty wounded. Captain Philibert complained of the conduct of the Dutch, Hamburgers and Prussians on board.⁴¹³

The conduct of the captains of the *Clorinde*, the *Etoile*, and the *Sultane* shows that, until the last day of the war, the officers' spirits remained unshaken by discouragement.

The Count of Artois, appointed Lieutenant General of the Kingdom of France, concluded a convention with the allied sovereigns on April 23, 1814, which ended hostilities. The final peace treaty was signed on May 30. The island of Malta and its dependencies belonged to Great Britain. The colonies, trading posts and establishments that France possessed on 1 January 1792 were returned to it, with the exception of the Tobago Islands, Saint Lucia, the Ile-de-France, Rodrigue Island and the Seychelles, which became the property of England. The eastern part of Santo Domingo, ceded to France during the Peace of Basel, was returned to Spain. The French fishing rights on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, on the coasts of the island of that name and in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence were restored to the same level as in 1792. The buildings, munitions, construction materials and armaments found in the maritime places returned to the allies were to be shared between France and the new possessors in the proportion of two-thirds for France. Excepted from this division were the ships and naval equipment existing in the maritime places that had fallen into the power of the Allies before April 23.

Napoleon, having left the island of Elba on February 26, 1815, landed at Cannes on March 1, crossed France, and arrived in Paris on the 20th. Following the treaty signed on March 25 between Austria, England, Prussia, and Russia, the Court of London ordered its navy to attack French vessels.⁴¹⁴

On April 30, 1815, the forty-four-gun *Melpomène*, captained by Collet, was sighted at the entrance to the Bay of Naples by the eighty-gun *Rivoli*. Combat ensued between the two ships; after a very honorable defense, the frigate lowered its flag. The forty-four-gun *Dryade*, captained by Senez, chased off near Ischia by a ship, a frigate, and a brig, was able to enter Gaeta. A new peace treaty containing, with regard to the navy, the same clauses as that of May 30, 1814, was signed in Paris on November 20, 1815, between France and the Allied Powers.⁴¹⁵

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BOOK X

The French Navy from 1793 to 1815. - Causes of Our Disasters. - Conclusion.

I

After the American Revolutionary War, the government made great efforts to develop our naval forces and position France to once again balance the fortunes of its rival at sea. The Revolution arrived. The events of that time deeply affected the navy. Disorders broke out in the ports and on ships. The brave and experienced general staff, which had fought in the American War, disappeared. It is still said today that the officers of the old navy, by abandoning their ships, brought about the disasters suffered by our squadrons. Historians who support this thesis are making a serious error. At the beginning of the Revolution, the officers, very attached to their careers, did not want to leave, they were forced to. That is the truth. The Constituent Assembly, in the face of the troubles which broke out in the ports, remained calm, almost indifferent; it treated, in the same way, M. d'Albert de Rions and the men who had dragged this squadron leader to prison.⁴¹⁶

The same words of banal kindness were applied to the general officer who had done his duty, to the municipality that had exceeded its responsibilities, to the National Guard that had prevented nothing, and to the residents and workers among whom were the guilty parties. The crisis France was going through had, without a doubt, weakened the government's resources; but it would be a mistake to believe that the Assembly did not, at that moment, have the necessary strength to impose its will. The troops would have done their duty if they had received a strong impetus. During the events at Toulon at the end of 1789, it was said that the army officers had abandoned their naval comrades. Not only did the latter protest against this accusation, but the squadron leader of Albert de Rions, in a document which was made public, paid tribute to the feelings of devotion and discipline of the officers and soldiers of the garrison. The weakness shown by the Assembly, when it found itself obliged to pronounce on the events which occurred in Toulon, in December 1789, had disastrous consequences. The municipalities and the clubs, intimidated for a moment, resumed their march forward to seize power; everywhere the men of disorder continued their work. After the acts of indiscipline, committed, in 1790, by the crews of the Brest squadron, the discouraged officers, feeling powerless, sent the minister an address in which their situation was explained in very dignified terms. They demanded, not in their own interest but in the name of the honour and security of France, that the government take the necessary measures to restore order to our fleets.⁴¹⁷

They were ready, if they did not possess the confidence of the crews, to place in other hands "the means of honor and glory to which the hope of being useful to the fatherland held them strongly attached." The Constituent Assembly made no effort to restore discipline. In this situation, when the orders they gave were only responded to with insults and threats, what were the squadron leaders, captains, and officers to do? It is not enough to say that the former general staff deserted their posts; we must consider, in light of this accusation, the position in which the officers who took this course found themselves. If the squadron leaders Albert de Rions and Souillac left the command of the Brest squadron, Bougainville refused the rank of vice-admiral that was offered to him. However, it has not yet occurred to anyone to attack Bougainville's patriotism. No consideration justifies the decree issued by the Constituent Assembly on April 29, 1791. How could this Assembly have the thought of destroying a state of affairs that had brought about the glorious results of the American War of Independence? The Constituent Assembly had the mission of reconciling respect for previous rights with the necessities of the present. Since the French were, by virtue of the Constitution, eligible for all civil and military positions, its role in matters relating to the organization of the fleet's general staff was clearly indicated. While maintaining institutions which had contributed to the greatness of the country, it ensured that all young people, without distinction of class, fulfilling the conditions determined by the regulations, were admitted as naval students. In these new conditions, the rank of second lieutenant, no longer having any reason to exist, disappeared.⁴¹⁸

The situation of the former officers worsened as the revolution progressed. After the events in Toulon on December 1, 1789, the officers of the ports of Brest and Rochefort had demanded the prompt punishment of the guilty, understanding full well that if the government showed any weakness at the onset of a crisis whose severity was easy to predict, and the cause of discipline would be lost. The officers of the port of Toulon, with the exception of the fleet captain who had replaced squadron leader Albert de Rions as naval commander, had joined their comrades' efforts. The Toulon municipality, which still lacked the full measure of its strength, was intimidated. Somewhat reassured by the conduct of the new naval commander, who wrote a letter to the minister in which it was read: "Monsieur le comte de Flotte has given, in this meeting, a signal proof of prudence and maturity which assures him forever the confidence and the love of the inhabitants. It is by such procedures that calm, subordination and harmony reign and have succeeded the storms excited by a misunderstood stiffness." The tragic end of Rear-Admiral de Flotte, in 1792, showed what these protests dictated by self-interest were worth. The revolutionary tribunal of Brest inaugurated its installation by sending to the scaffold the lieutenant of the ship de Rougemont and two young men, the ensigns Le Dall de Kéréon and Louis de Monteclerc, the first aged nineteen and the second eighteen. These three officers were in the Antilles, in 1792, on the ships of Commander Rivière; Far from sharing the feelings of their leader, they had separated from him as soon as it had been in their power.⁴¹⁹

This had been within their power. Free to remain abroad, they had returned to France. Arriving in Brest at the beginning of 1793, they had not been subject to any special measures by the Minister of the Navy. Their innocence was evident; however, nothing could save them (1).

We have described the treatment inflicted by Representatives Bréard, Tréhouart, and Jean-Bon-Saint-André on Vice-Admiral Morard de Galle and officers of all ranks of the Brest fleet, long-time members of the French Navy. On February 7, 1794, Vice-Admiral Grimoard, one of the most distinguished officers of the old navy, perished on the scaffold. He had been called, at the request of the inhabitants, to the duties of commander of arms in Rochefort; his conduct had always been very correct and no reproach could be leveled at him. The representatives Lequinio, Laignelot and their friends, who were particularly keen to bring down the head of this vice-admiral, accused him of having persecuted the patriots during a campaign he had carried out in Saint-Domingue, a few years earlier. A few days later, Rear-Admiral Truguet, in a letter addressed to the Committee of Public Safety, spoke, with a frankness that did him credit, of the situation of former officers who had remained in France with the intention of serving their country.

1). This judgment struck the town with stupor and terror. The streets, contemporaries often told us, were deserted for several days, and only members of the popular society could be seen circulating, mingling with the soldiers of the Mountain Battalion, all singing in chorus the *Ça Ira* and the *Carmagnole*. After the execution, this procession, swelled by the knitters, faithful regulars at the popular society's sessions, loudly called Laignelot and Tréhouart, who had to come to the terrace of the Hôtel de la Marine, where they were staying, to mingle their voices with those of these tigers and shrews, their worthy companions. (Levot, *History of the City and Port of Brest During the Terror*.)⁴²⁰

He was not afraid to say that they were persecuted, arbitrarily dismissed, and dragged into dungeons. He added, which was not without some merit at the time, that if patriotism was the first of all virtues, justice was a duty. Finally, he invoked the interest of the country to persuade the committee to recall, to our ships, officers "who had not been replaced and who could not be."

The Convention members had no appreciation, to any degree, of the difficulties presented by war at sea. A merchant ship, of Greek nationality, was at anchor off Brégançon, in the Hyères Islands, when it was attacked by English boats. A Frenchman, the merchant captain Trullet, a passenger on board this vessel, behaved in a very energetic manner. The Convention appointed him "captain of a warship" by a decree dated January 8, 1794. The minister sent Captain Trullet to Toulon with an unmaintained ensign's certificate. At the session of the Convention on the 29th, a deputy N. (he is thus designated in the *Moniteur*) made a very violent attack against the Minister of the Navy who had given Trullet an unmaintained ensign's certificate, while the express will of the Convention was that this captain should have command of a warship. Bourdon de l'Oise said that Dalbarade had understood very well what the Convention wanted, but that he had made a game of disobeying it. The minister was entering the Convention hall at that moment. Questioned by the president, the former privateer did not bother with eloquence; he replied that he had not attached to the decree the meaning that the assembly gave it.⁴²¹

The discussion, which until then had focused only on the form, that is, on Dalbarade's alleged disobedience, then turned to the substance. Jean-Bon-Saint-André declared that one could not, without compromising the interests of the Republic, interpret the Assembly's decree as Bourdon intended. It seemed to him, moreover, unacceptable that the Convention had wanted to immediately give Trullet, about whose abilities it had no information, command of a ship of the line. Legendre, who had been a sailor, supported Jean-Bon-Saint-André. "I started out as a cabin boy," he said, "and I became a sailor." I applaud the courageous action that has earned Citizen Trullet a reward; but how can he be made to pass from the command of a merchant ship to that of a warship? It is as if you were to make a boatswain out of a cabin boy." This opposition brought Bourdon back to the podium; more violent and more aggressive than he had been at the beginning of the session, he declared that the Assembly should make no concessions. Jean-Bon-Saint-André replied, but this new attempt, made to enlighten the Assembly, remained without result. The Convention, by a new decree, appointed Citizen Trullet captain of the ship and ordered the minister to designate the ship, the command of which was to be entrusted to him. All ambiguity disappeared and Dalbarade had only to obey. As the Revolution progressed, the level of naval officers, in terms of morality and intellectuality, declined. Ignorance was combined with baseness, intrigue and jealousy. This was the opinion of a man who was not suspect, we are talking about Jean-Bon Saint-André.⁴²²

This representative, enlightened by the exercise of power, outraged by the base passions stirring around him, tired of the denunciations heaped on officers, whether from the old or new navy, spoke these stern words to the headquarters of the Brest squadron: "We must eradicate from all hearts the seeds of passions that harm the public good. Numerous petitions have been presented to us asking for advancement; we are told of preferential treatment, seniority. Everyone boasts of their talents and experience. Everyone wants to command; we wonder where those who have the courage to obey are... And what is the result of this base jealousy that makes the elevation of one of our comrades seem an affront?" Forgetting all duties, negligence in service, slackening of discipline, unfortunate defeats, shame and disgrace."

Vice-Admiral Villaret, to whom the minister complained in 1795 about the poor quality of our officers, responded in these terms: "Ignorance, intrigue, pretensions, apathy for the service, base jealousy, ambition for rank, not for the opportunity to distinguish themselves, but because the job provides more money, this is unfortunately a too accurate picture of nineteen-twentieths of the officers." When the domestic situation eased, not only were the officers implicated in the so-called Quiberon and Toulon affairs released, but they also resumed, in the navy, the positions they had held before their incarceration. The officers of all ranks, who had perished on the revolutionary scaffold, were no more guilty than those to whom the Committee of Public Safety rendered this belated justice.⁴²³

The coastal population, left destitute by the cessation of maritime trade, could only survive by serving on state ships or on armed privateers. At the outbreak of hostilities, the seafarers eagerly obeyed the law calling them into service; but in Paris, the need to care for these personnel was not understood. The State appropriated the possessions of the seafarers' fund, which soon ceased to function, since the government paid neither the sailors' wages nor the delegations they had granted on behalf of their families. The invalids' fund was emptied, as had been the seafarers' fund; needless to say, it was never refilled. Since maritime trade no longer existed, there were no sailors' wages liable to the statutory deduction; consequently, all the sources which usually fed this fund were dried up. The suppression of the pensions which it paid, of the assistance which it gave to old people, women and children, left the inhabitants of the coasts to misery and despair. The shares of prize money, coming from the sale of merchant ships captured from the enemy, would have provided some money for the families of the sailors; but neither the captors nor the Invalides fund received what was due to them. The sailors disappeared. Some sailed to Germany, Sweden, Denmark and under the flags of the Hanseatic cities; others remained in France, but they went into hiding. The crews were formed with conscripts. The administrators replaced the officers in the port service. As no one wanted to preserve anything from the past, the old organization no longer functioned; everything was regulated by the decrees of the Convention, the orders of the representatives, sometimes by simple ministerial letters.⁴²⁴

The result was inexpressible confusion and disorder. The presence of the representatives, sent on missions to our ports or on our squadrons, became a new element of unrest and difficulty. Most of them had only the vaguest notions about the service they were to lead. However, no resolution was made without their consent. They dictatorially decided absolutely specific questions, concerning maneuver, artillery, or construction. The Committee of Public Safety, as well as the representatives on mission to our fleets, obviously wanted victory; one must even believe that they were convinced of the excellence of the means they employed. However, their administration had no other result than to complete the ruin of the ancient maritime edifice, still standing at the beginning of the war. The rebellion paralyzed the movements of the squadron commanded by Morard de Galle, at the same time as it became a new cause of disorganization. The Brest squadron, after having undergone the changes ordered by Jean-Bon-Saint-André, put back to sea; we have seen that it had returned, leaving seven vessels in the hands of the enemy. If it were permissible to give, as an explanation for the departure of Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, the obligation to protect the arrival of the convoy escorted by Vanstabel, what could one say to justify the cruise of the great winter? Thoughtlessness and ignorance of maritime matters presided over our decisions, in the Mediterranean as in the Ocean. The Committee of Public Safety proposed sometimes to retake Corsica, sometimes to drive the English navy from the Mediterranean.⁴²⁵

These projects were excellent, but it was still necessary to determine whether we had the means to carry them out; this was not a concern.

The Directory, driven by a very strong desire to reorganize the navy, attempted to bring some order to this chaos. Unfortunately, it encountered very strong opposition in the Councils, which included former members of the Convention. The institutions relating to the preparation of our naval forces were not modified. Admiral Truguet made some improvements to the composition of the fleet staff; but the new government, not taking sufficient account of our situation, wanted to undertake too much. Contemporary accounts show us the general feeling of the navy, openly hostile to the Irish expedition. The general officers, the captains, that is to say the most authoritative men, refused to believe that such a serious undertaking could be attempted, in the depths of winter, with this assembly of vessels, armed the day before, encumbered with troops and whose crews were composed almost entirely of conscripts. At the beginning of 1798, the conquest of Malta and the expedition to Egypt were resolved upon. Despite the difficulties of this undertaking, the greatest obstacle was to come from our own situation, that is to say, the exhaustion of our resources. There were still a few vessels in the ports, but we had neither sailors nor supplies. On May 6, 1798, the naval officer wrote to the minister, sending him the state of the vessels, frigates and other buildings making up the expedition: "You will notice, without doubt, in this state, a fairly considerable deficit in seafarers....."⁴²⁶

There is, moreover, an observation that I must make, and which seems reassuring to me, namely that, when, on March 14, 1796, the ship of the Republic, the *Ça-Ira*, fought in the Mediterranean against six English warships, it had on board only one hundred and eighty-seven sailors and four hundred and ninety-six soldiers... All the ships of the squadron, under the command of Vice-Admiral Brueys, have, respectively in their ranks, a number of sailors at least equal to that of the *Ça-Ira*, which had eighty guns, and they will also have a greater number of troops." How could a steward, that is to say a civil servant unfamiliar with naval practice, be charged with dealing with such serious matters? The *Moniteur* inserted, on May 31, 1798, a correspondence from Toulon, in which it was said: "Never has a fleet been so well supplied, in such a short time and with such few means as were at hand. It lacks nothing and yet we continually hear complaints and threats from people who always know everything except their condition." Now, we know from the letters of Admiral Brueys that the squadron had left, having very little food and completely deprived of provisions. It is to this situation that we had been led by those who, since the beginning of the Revolution, never ceased to say that officers should be excluded from all port operations. If it is legitimate to judge institutions by their results, it is easy to see what ours were worth. It is no less clear that, from 1793 to 1799, we were defeated by ourselves before being defeated by the enemy. In such conditions, could we fight against the English navy, led, in councils as on the battlefields, by its most illustrious leaders?⁴²⁷

II

Under the Consulate and the Empire, order and discipline reigned aboard our ships and in our arsenals. The navy had, something it had always lacked since 1793, money, but its development exceeded its strength. The weakness of its personnel and the poor condition of its equipment made campaign plans, although excellent in theory, most often impractical. Admiral Ganteaume was sent to Egypt with seven ships carrying troops and supplies. The *Régénérée* had anchored in Alexandria on March 2; This frigate had been, the day before, in the middle of Admiral Keith's fleet, which was then heading for Aboukir Bay. Rear-Admiral Ganteaume, having been in the Mediterranean for four days when the *Régénérée* had left Rochefort, was to precede this frigate to Alexandria, and consequently arrive at this point before Admiral Keith's return. He would, it is true, have encountered Rear-Admiral Bickerton's division, but this only consisted of a few vessels. Finally, this division often abandoned the cruise in front of Alexandria to head for other points on the coast. It is therefore correct to say that Rear-Admiral Ganteaume had the most serious chances of arriving in Egypt.⁴²⁸

Whether or not Admiral Ganteaume had shown sufficient boldness, which cannot be easily decided, it must be recognized that the arrangements made upon leaving Brest took no account of the difficulties associated with his mission. The same observation applies, with greater force, to the ships dispatched individually to Alexandria, such as the *Africaine* and the *Sans-Pareille*. It will be recalled that the first of these vessels, in its engagement with the *Phoebe*, suffered 127 killed and 176 wounded, while its adversary suffered only two killed and twelve wounded. As for the corvette *Sans-Pareille*, it was unable to fire a cannon shot because its crew was seasick. The successful outcome of the Battle of Algeciras, fought on July 6, 1801, caused legitimate satisfaction in France. The skill of the commanders and the fine conduct of the crews brought about this result; but the capture of the *Saint-Antoine* and the explosion of the two Spanish three-deckers, which occurred a few days later, demonstrated once again that lasting success cannot be expected with ships insufficiently prepared for combat.

After the relief efforts in Egypt, came the landing in England. The Boulogne flotilla was created; its organization was remarkable. The task was within our strength. The navy was able to provide each ship with a sufficient number of sailors; repeated exercises familiarized the auxiliary personnel with the maneuvers. The Boulogne flotilla presented the spectacle, rare at that time in the French navy, of vessels capable of directing effective artillery fire on the enemy.⁴²⁹

Various circumstances, such as the death of La Touche-Tréville and Villeneuve's return to Toulon, led the Emperor to modify, several times, the campaign plan, devised to bring one of our squadrons into the English Channel. Finally, Villeneuve left the Mediterranean; rallying the Spanish off Cadiz, he went to Martinique. Upon hearing the news of Nelson's arrival, the combined squadron headed for Europe. The slowness with which this crossing was carried out was the primary cause of the campaign's misfortunes. If we had moved away from the Antilles more quickly, the *Curieux* incident would not have occurred. The British Admiralty, not receiving any particular information on the route followed by Villeneuve, did not give Cornwallis the order to lift the blockade of Rochefort and Ferrol. Since the battle of Cape Finisterre did not take place, our ships were spared significant damage, and we did not waste the days of July 23 and 24 pursuing the English. This last circumstance was all the more regrettable since the winds were blowing, at that moment, from a direction favorable to going to Ferrol. On the other hand, the question of food, water and the sick, which led the squadron to Vigo, would not have been important. The combined squadron, rallied by the ships of Admirals Gourdon and Grandellana and by Rochefort's division, would have headed immediately for Brest. The forces commanded by Nelson could not have intervened, since this admiral, having arrived at Gibraltar on July 19, did not appear off Ushant until August 15. The allied fleet would have numbered thirty-four vessels, and fifty-six if Villeneuve had managed to effect his junction with Ganteaume.⁴³⁰

Cornwallis, positioned between the two French admirals, would have found himself at the command of twenty-two ships and twenty-seven, if we had allowed Calder to withdraw intact. Such would have been the situation if the combined squadron had had a course, we will not say superior, but ordinary. Thus, the first obstacle encountered by the plan drawn up by the Emperor came from the poor course of the Atlas and five Spanish ships. Admiral Villeneuve, if he had been fortunately inspired, would have left these vessels at Martinique. Leaving the Antilles with fourteen ships, he found fourteen at Ferrol and five at Rochefort. The combined squadron, it goes without saying, did not encounter Calder off Cape Finisterre; On the contrary, it was intended to surprise this admiral who was charged with blockading Ferrol. Leaving the Antilles on June 8th with a well-advanced squadron, Villeneuve joined Admirals Gourdon and Grandellana at the beginning of July, judging by the crossing of the Curieux, which arrived at Portsmouth on July 9th, after leaving Nelson on June 12th, and was heading for Brest with thirty-three vessels, twenty-three French and ten Spanish. What would have been the outcome? It is difficult to know, but, under the conditions stated above, we would have played the game with very serious chances of winning.

Admiral Villeneuve anchored at Cadiz on August 20th. This same admiral, who had dared, despite very precise orders, to come to this port, which had become, two months later, the plaything of fate, took to the sea, contrary to the general feeling of his army and his own, to rush to meet this battle of which he had seen, for so long, the serious consequences.⁴³¹

His mistakes, along with those made by Admirals Gravina and Dumanoir and several captains of the combined army, had a regrettable influence on events, but it would be a mistake to attribute the loss of the Battle of Trafalgar to them. The inferiority of the personnel and the poor condition of the equipment, far more than the errors of the leaders of the Franco-Spanish fleet, brought about this disastrous outcome. Admiral Nelson displayed the talents of a great general that day, but his audacity served him less than his profound knowledge of the value of the English ships and our own. Since the beginning of the war, everything had been modified and perfected among our adversaries. The English fired quickly and well, understanding that, in a naval affair, the last word must rest with the cannon. We saw the *Royal Sovereign* advance alone on our line, cross it, fight the *Santa Ana* yard by yard and remain, for nearly a quarter of an hour, alone in the middle of several rearguard vessels, suffering little from this poorly directed fire. The *Victory*, on which the *Bucentaure*, the *Santissima Trinidad*, the *Héros* and several vanguard vessels fired for a very long time, suffered only insignificant losses. A squadron, incapable, due to the inferiority of its artillery, of stopping the vessels which marched at the head of Nelson's and Collingwood's columns, found itself, for that very reason, unable to defend itself against a well-organized fleet. This point cannot be overemphasized. Mistakes were made by the allies. The observation squadron, kept to windward, cut off Collingwood's column, and the advance guard, withdrawn in time to the centre, took part in the combat; our losses would have been less great and the damage done to the enemy more considerable.⁴³²

All this is certain, but the efforts of Admiral Villeneuve, faced with an active, skillful adversary with a solid, well-trained army, were already stricken with sterility.

Trafalgar marked the end of major naval encounters. The government decided to send small squadrons on cruises, but it was too late for this method of warfare to produce results. The English navy had grown to such an extent that our squadrons, wherever they appeared, found themselves confronted by superior forces. Admiral de Leissègues saw the ships he commanded destroyed not by the squadron sent to search for him, but by Admiral Duckworth, who had abandoned the blockade of Cadiz to pursue Rochefort's division. Admiral Willaumez was about to be joined by Sir John Strachan when his ships were scattered by the storm; finally, a squadron was cruising off Cape Finisterre to intercept him on his return. Our activity focused on construction. While waiting for the moment to reappear at sea, it was by defeating England's allies on the Continent that we intended to force that power to sue for peace. The Boulogne flotilla was reorganized; camps were established in the vicinity of our squadrons. We intended to go, depending on circumstances, to Egypt, the English colonies, Ireland, and perhaps England. The uprising of Portugal and Spain dashed these hopes. Admiral Rosily's ships at Cadiz and the Atlas at Vigo fell into the hands of the Spanish. The enemy redoubled their efforts to reach the remains of our navy.⁴³³

The squadron on the Île d'Aix was destroyed or rendered powerless. Tracing the causes that led to this disaster reveals the weakness of advice and the lack of firmness in action that characterized most maritime affairs of the time. Our inferiority, in terms of personnel and equipment, was evident. This state of affairs required extremely careful maritime arrangements on our part; either through indecision or ignorance, we let things go to chance.

The minister, warned by private intelligence from England and by letters from Admiral Allemand of the enemy's preparations, did nothing to ensure the safety of the vessels anchored in the harbor of the Île d'Aix. He left this task to the squadron commander and the maritime prefect. On April 3, Admiral Allemand, faced with continual difficulties, wrote to him: "I am stopped every day by refusals, even though they are requests of little value and nevertheless very necessary." On April 8, the minister ordered the maritime prefect: "not to refuse, in general, anything that could ensure the defense of the squadron on the island of Aix." This letter, whose measured terms were obviously not up to the circumstances, arrived too late. Just as the minister had relied on the prefect and the squadron commander to deal with the difficulties raised by the presence of Admiral Gambier in the harbor of the Basques, Vice-Admiral Martin relied on the director of the port to satisfy the squadron's requests. It was through a letter from Admiral Allemand that he learned, on March 31, that no material had arrived at the island of Aix.⁴³⁴

He then wrote to the port director: "It is quite surprising that, since the 24th of this month, when you received the order to send the necessary items to the island of Aix to build a jetty there, these items have not yet arrived. Current circumstances imperatively require that these items leave immediately. I warn you that you will become personally responsible for any delays that may cause any event that must be anticipated, according to the notice I have informed you of." Thus, from March 24th to the 31st, nothing had been done, and the maritime prefect was unaware of it. England dealt us a final blow by seizing our colonies. The French navy was then represented at sea only by a few rare ships sent in pursuit of enemy trade.

Admiral Decrès, during his long ministerial career, devoted himself to administration with extreme care. He made conscientious efforts to introduce order and economy into the various services of his department; but he neglected the most important part of his duties: the maritime and military organization of the fleet. Our ships, although generally well built, rarely managed to escape enemy pursuit. Poorly secured masts, weak rigging, and poor maneuvering equipment negated the advantages that hull shapes could provide. It frequently happened that ships, putting to sea, lost their topmasts. The Toulon squadron, according to Admiral Emériau's reports, rarely went out to sea without causing damage.

The training of the staff was very poor, that of the crews below mediocre; some attention was paid to maneuvers, but the artillery service was completely neglected.⁴³⁵

The Emperor wrote to Vice-Admiral Decrès on May 23, 1806: "The naval gunners are not trained. Everyone's opinion is that they should be trained to fire at an old ship's hull in the harbor. It's an exercise I constantly recommend and which is not performed..... The navy only knows how to complain that its sailors lack experience without bothering to train them."

In summary, from 1793 to 1815, the navy was not fit for war; it lacked an essential quality: it was not military. The general staffs are brave, the crews display energy and courage worthy of the highest praise, but neither knows how to fight. Exceptions exist, but they cannot invalidate the rule. In combat, our losses are considerable, those of the enemy almost zero. If, through our stubbornness, through a great sacrifice of men, we save the honor of the flag, we do no harm to the enemy. That is not war.

The preparation of fleets and the organization of personnel, officers and crews, are the work of time. When the time comes to fight, it is too late to touch the institutions. That is why we must apply ourselves tirelessly to perfecting them during peacetime.⁴³⁶



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